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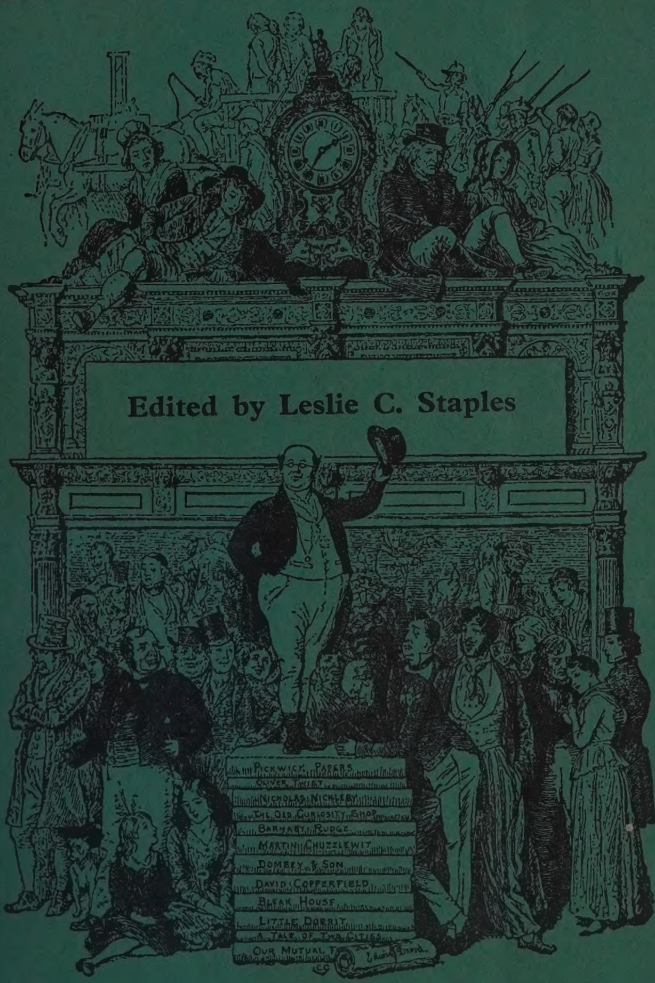

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CONTENTS

	PAGE
The Newly Installed Plaque at Dickens House	99
David Copperfield with the Scott Antarctic Expedition	100
The Artistry of Dickens as an English Novelist. Saxon Walker	102
Hats in Dickens. Frank A. Gibson	108
Charles Chaplin at the Birthday Dinner	111
In Memoriam: Humphry House. K.J.F.	115
The Memorandum Book, Forster and *Edwin Drood*. Pansy Pakenham	117
A Forgotten Book, I. Dennis Birch	121
Recent Dickensiana	126
Plays from the Christmas Numbers of *Household Words* Malcolm Morley	127
Dickens's Insurance Policies. W. J. Carlton	133
Notes on *Barnaby Rudge*. T. W. Hill	137
Sydney Margaret Dickens	141
The Dickens Fellowship	141

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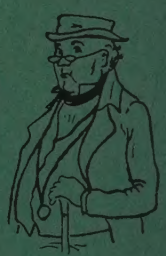
IN THE STEPS OF

CHARLES DICKENS

by

William Addison



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Photograph] [*"Planet News"*

Mr. Peter Scott, Surgeon Commander G. Murray Levick (right) and Sir Raymond Priestley (left) at the Dickens House with the copy of *David Copperfield* used on the Scott Antarctic Expedition.

THE DICKENSIAN

SUMMER NUMBER

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THE DICKENS HOUSE

acquired and opened in 1925 by

THE DICKENS FELLOWSHIP

largely through the efforts

of B. W. Matz, its founder and

first Editor of "The Dickensian."

In 1952 (its Golden Jubilee Year)

the Fellowship, assisted by

The News Chronicle

(Successor to The Daily News, founded by Charles Dickens in 1846)

completed for the House

an Endowment Fund

which it dedicated to

Walter Dexter

second Editor of "The Dickensian"

who devoted his life to the

memory of Charles Dickens

The inscription on the bronze plaque now erected in the hall of Dickens House.

DAVID COPPERFIELD
with
THE SCOTT ANTARCTIC EXPEDITION

DICKENS so closely identified himself with the humbler and anonymous heroes of the battle of life, that it is something of a novelty to be able to link his name with one of the great heroic figures of the century. When the Dickens House was reopened on March 22nd, and found to be beautifully redecorated (thanks to the Dexter Memorial Fund), an interesting and unique ceremony took place.

The High Commissioner for New Zealand, Mr. T. Clifton Webb, acting on behalf of the Auckland Branch of the Dickens Fellowship, handed a copy of *David Copperfield*, to Mr. Peter Scott, the

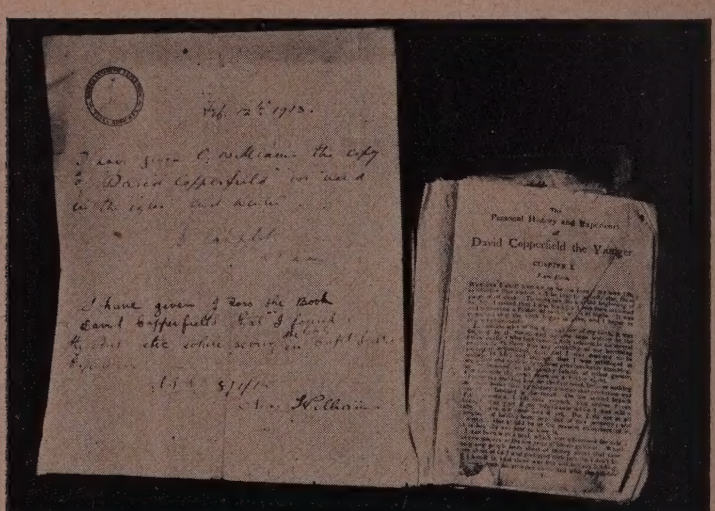


Photo by] [*Brian Greaves*

distinguished naturalist, and the son of Capt. Scott of the Antarctic, who accepted it on behalf of the Trustees of the Dickens House. It was not a first edition, either "in parts" or "original cloth", or indeed of any intrinsic value at all. Its binding and title page are missing, and replaced by brown paper; the small pages of the "Collins Clear Type" Edition, such as were published at one shilling in the days of Capt. Scott, are now tattered, torn, and soiled with blubber oil, for this is the copy that accompanied the Northern Party of the historic Antarctic Expedition, when they were isolated from the others for two years.

Lt. V. L. A. Campbell, the leader of the Northern Party, now living in Newfoundland, has identified the volume as the one that cheered them during the long Antarctic winter, and which he

gave, when the expedition returned to New Zealand, to a seaman, Charles Williams, who also served with Capt. Scott. After passing through a number of hands, it came into the possession of the Auckland Branch of the Dickens Fellowship, which generously decided that its proper resting place was the Dickens House in London.

The little company gathered in the "Dingley Dell" Kitchen of the Dickens House, and Mr. Clifton Webb paid tribute to Dickens, expressing his pleasure at making the presentation on behalf of his countrymen. He spoke of the heroic last message of Capt. Scott, how it had stirred the world, and recalled how the explorer, referring to his son, had written, "make the boy interested in Natural History" a request that had been so abundantly fulfilled.

Mr. Scott said that he was happy to accept the book on behalf of the Trustees, for he himself had experience of the value of books in the wilder parts of the world. He was greatly looking forward to his first visit to New Zealand next year, and to visiting the three monuments to his father erected there, referred to by the High Commissioner, one of them being the work of his mother.

Two members of the Expedition, Sir Raymond Priestley and Surgeon Comdr. G. Murray Levick, were also present and spoke of their memories. It was Comdr. Levick who read *David Copperfield* nightly to his companions in the igloo, a chapter each evening and taking about sixty nights to complete it, by the light of lamps improvised in tins, with blubber oil and rope yarn. Sir Raymond recalled that on the earlier Shackleton Expedition, of which he was also a member, *Pickwick Papers* had been read to lighten the long winter nights. But Sir Ernest had to bar this particular book after eleven o'clock, as the laughter of the listeners kept awake those who wanted to sleep.

Mr. Henry Charles Dickens, Life President of the Fellowship, voiced the thanks of the Trustees to the High Commissioner and to Mr. Peter Scott, for their attendance, and thus making the little ceremony so memorable.

In addition to the Trustees, five ladies and gentlemen who happened to be visiting the Dickens House at the time, were invited to be present. Two were Londoners, one a lady from Paris, and two from Sydney, Australia. Comdr. Roy Stratton, Mr. Dickens's son-in-law, represented the United States and completed the cosmopolitan party.

L.C.S.

For early references to this book in *The Dickensian*, see the volumes for 1913, pp. 59 and 143, and 1914, p. 59.

NORTH AMERICAN JUBILEES

Two North American Branches recently celebrated their Golden Jubilee. New York on April 22nd, at the Sheraton-Astor Hotel in which the Branch was formed in 1905, and Toronto on May 5th, on Prince Arthur Avenue. We send our cordial congratulations and best wishes for their continued prosperity.

THE ARTISTRY OF DICKENS AS AN ENGLISH NOVELIST

By Saxon Walker

I

His Debt to Tradition

IT is sometimes forgotten that the novels which Dickens read time and time again as a youth were not so much those of his immediate predecessors in the nineteenth century, such as Scott and Jane Austen, but rather the great English novelists of the eighteenth century—Fielding, Smollett, Richardson and Sterne. From each of these writers Dickens took what was most typically English, giving new life to one of the strongest traditions in English literature, and his greatness as a novelist is his success in blending the different elements in this tradition as no other writer before him had been able to do. In his outlook on life there is a combination of attitudes more often found in separate writers, the one being romantic and the other satirical. It was from Richardson, more than from the other three, that he inherited the romantic and personal and sentimental vein; it was from the other three, and particularly from Smollett, that he inherited the type of broad comedy, often satirical, which counterbalances the sentimentality. Perhaps, to be more accurate, one should say that these are opposite sides of one and the same temperament of excess. Nevertheless, in writing novels that were not exclusively romantic or satirical, but a combination of both, Dickens enriched the novel as Shakespeare had enriched the drama. The satirical comedy was on the whole predominant in his early works, when, like all writers, he was more under the influence of his literary forbears, especially Smollett. As he matured as a man and developed his powers of compassion, and as he matured as an artist and developed his literary personality and his sense of the unity of the novel, these two qualities became reconciled and eventually merged. Thus, for example, whilst *The Pickwick Papers* is largely broad comedy, and *The Old Curiosity Shop* largely sentimental, *Bleak House* is a more balanced work.

The comic tradition begins earlier than the eighteenth century novel, and Dickens owes much to these earlier influences. In his choice of names for his characters there are signs that he was indebted to Ben Jonson and his theory of humours, for the comedian's tendency to exaggerate and isolate human foibles is one that has given rise to the occasional charge that Dickens's portraits are caricatures. Dickens was an enthusiastic follower of Punch and Judy, and the Punch and Judy tradition is in a direct line of descent from the mediaeval and Elizabethan comedy of humours and the Italian *commèdia dell' arte*, and clearly influenced his style. Nor did he despise humour of a purely verbal kind, and for this one has to go back to the euphuistic tradition of the Elizabethans. The slapstick comedy of violence, in which he playfully indulged from time to time, is as old as comedy itself. Yet there is a more serious element to his comedy, the element of social satire by means of which he depicts the im-

perfections of human life, and here again he has a tradition to support him, the tradition of *Don Quixote, Gargantua, L'Avare,* and *Gulliver's Travels.* This tradition took a characteristically English shape in the novels of Fielding and Smollett, and it is from these that Dickens learnt his art and craft as a comic novelist. Both Fielding and Smollett are known to have been influenced by the first great comic artists of the English bourgeoisie, Hogarth and Rowlandson, either of whom could have drawn admirable illustrations of many Dickensian scenes. The Eatanswill election is a nineteenth century scene depicted in an eighteenth century manner.

Dickens gives countless examples of all these aspects of comedy, but each one has originality as well. Human foibles and humours are exemplified, for instance, in the hypocritical man, Mr. Pecksniff; or again, in the optimist, Mr. Micawber; but the originality comes in the fact that these are not simply caricatures, but fully realistic persons. Verbal witticism is to be found in the Wellerisms, and the originality is evident in the fact that the trick has given rise to the term, Wellerism, which never existed before. In the tradition of the comedy of violence there is one of the first passages we laugh at in one of the first of his books that we are likely to read as a child—and one of the first he wrote—the description of Mr. Pickwick's altercation with the cabman, the ensuing fisticuffs, and the arrival of Mr. Jingle on the scene; but the original touch is this, that although Smollett could have imagined the comedy of the situation, he could never have created so sympathetic a character as Mr. Pickwick himself. For social satire we remember the scores of injustices that Dickens brought under review, often in a humour tinged with grimness as in the story of Jarndyce and Jarndyce in *Bleak House.* Yet the greater originality of Dickens is seen not so much in specific instances, but in his whole outlook. Most comedy involves an element of criticism. The comedian, for all his fun, is a mocker of human frailties and pretensions, and is often unsympathetic, if not bitter and unmerciful, like Swift. Dickens never allowed such feelings to overcome his sense of compassion and generosity, and if his drama sometimes becomes melodrama, his sentiment becomes sentimentality, and his characters become caricatures, the fact is that his excesses are in opposing directions, so that his compassion guards against too ruthless and harsh a laugh, and his laughter guards against too soft a sentiment, giving, on the whole, a balanced picture.

What Dickens took over most directly from the eighteenth century was the structural form of the novel, but by the time he had finished with it he had developed it into something far more like a twentieth century form than an eighteenth century one. Smollett's classic, *Roderick Random,* is typical of the picaresque tradition of episodic adventure stories. The life of the hero, who is often rather an attractive rogue, is told in a serial succession of entertaining episodes linked merely by the chronological sequence in which they occurred. Our interest as readers is a straightforward interest in the personality of the hero, and in what happens to him, and in the brisk way in which the events are related. This pattern, now relegated to the strip cartoon, is

very like what we find in *The Pickwick Papers*, except that the villain has become the victim. Dickens remains like Smollett in his treatment of character; he reveals a character's full shape and outline to the reader at the outset, merely filling in details as the story proceeds, and continuing to interest us in a figure already fully represented, but seen in further settings and from different views. The nineteenth century was to bring many new developments in the method of storytelling, and in these developments Dickens played a considerable part. First, he gave to his novels a greater continuity of plot construction, and was clearly concerned with the story as a whole, even where, as in the writing of *Dombey and Son*, he was prepared to alter the plan half way through. Secondly, he was aware of other methods of characterisation besides the straightforward one he practised at first, and he experimented with the use of surprise. A person is introduced gradually, as in real life, and only later revealed in the full depths of his character; this is the method so artfully developed by Ibsen and Henry James. Twentieth century writers have tried starting from the inner consciousness of a character, and working outwards towards the context of situations and actions in which the given character is placed. Dickens had too strong a sense of the dramatic ever to become so subjective as modern exponents of this method, such as Proust, Lawrence and Virginia Woolf; but he did travel some distance towards it. Earlier novelists had tended to keep themselves out of the stories they told, and to let the story create an illusion of history. Sterne was one of the first to forsake these principles, and Dickens popularised the incursion of the storyteller into his story, and freed it from the restrictions of strict and complete chronological sequence. Although he was not alone in these developments, he played an essential part in them.

If Dickens is compared, not with the great writers of the eighteenth or the twentieth century, but with those of his own century, some of his limitations become apparent. His studies of young womanhood are neither subtle, sensitive, nor particularly flattering, and he lacked the wit and irony of Jane Austen. Reading Thackeray, one is conscious that Dickens's excursions into upper class society lacked the understanding of his contemporary rival, and one is conscious of it again when reading Henry James. Compared with George Eliot his moral sensibility was vigorous rather than refined, and compared with Thomas Hardy he seems too parochial to feel really concerned with the destiny of man, or with the mystery of woman. Yet, although he lacks the range of a novelist such as Tolstoi, he exceeds them all in energy. He combined the separate strands of the eighteenth century novelists, greatly improved the handling of complicated plots, and added to these skills a fertility of invention, a power of imagination, and a creative optimism which have seldom been allied in one writer, and which stand as a rebuke and as an exhortation to the pessimists of our present age of anxiety.

II

His Contribution to Tradition

Dickens was a writer of novels of such an extensive scale that

the detail of his craftsmanship is often overlooked. It is true that what we remember most are the stories and the characters; it is also true that in such extensive work the quality of his writing varies from page to page; but it is equally true that there are episodes in his books which are written with an economy of words and a skilled construction that will endure, and profit from, the most minute analysis. One or two illustrations must suffice for the present.

In the second half of Chapter XXXI of *David Copperfield* we have the scene where David learns of the flight of Little Emily. The technique is one which the scenic artist would describe as montage. First we have intimation of the news through the emotion displayed by Ham and conveyed to David:

> "Mas'r Davy, will you come out a minute, and see what Em'ly and me has got to show you?"
>
> We went out. As I passed him at the door, I saw, to my astonishment and fright, that he was deadly pale. He pushed me hastily into the open air, and closed the door upon us. Only upon us two.
>
> "Ham! what's the matter?"
>
> "Mas'r Davy! ——" Oh, for his broken heart, how dreadfully he wept!
>
> I was paralysed by the sight of such grief. I don't know what I thought or what I dreaded. I could only look at him.
>
> "Ham! Poor good fellow! For heaven's sake tell me what's the matter!"
>
> "My love, Mas'r Davy—the pride and hope of my art—her that I'd have died for, and would die for now—she's gone!"
>
> "Gone?"
>
> "Em'ly's run away!"

The drama in this is artfully contrived; the reader is kept waiting, but not for too long; the emotion is persuasive, but not so excessive that it reaches its peak too soon. For a moment later, superimposed on this scene, we have the agony expressed by Mr. Peggotty as the news of the event is broken:

> Mr. Peggotty thrust forth his face; and never could I forget the change that came upon it when he saw us, if I were to live five hundred years.
>
> I remember a great wail and cry, and the women hanging about him, and we all standing in the room: I with a paper in my hand, which Ham had given me; Mr. Peggotty, with his vest torn open, his hair wild, his face and lips quite white, and blood trickling down his bosom (it had sprung from his mouth, I think), looking fixedly at me.
>
> "Read it, sir," he said, in a low, shivering voice. "Slow, please. I doen't know as I can understand."

Here the emotion is intensified, so that the power of the opening scene is fully exploited; and now, by the device of introducing Emily's letter, Dickens brings her absent voice into the scene and shows us the same event from her point of view, thus overlaying the emotion which those who are left behind are feeling, with the

emotion which she herself felt at leaving. In this way we are made aware simultaneously of the suffering entailed in making a personal decision, and of the suffering brought upon others later as a consequence of it; and this telescoping of time, so as to exhibit a deed and its judgment, is of the very essence of the modern novel. No sooner has this climax been reached than a new interest is brought in.

> Slowly, at last, he moved his eyes from my face, as if he were waking from a vision, and cast them round the room. Then he said, in a low voice:
>
> "Who's the man? I want to know his name."
>
> Ham glanced at me, and suddenly I felt a shock that struck me back.

"There's a man suspected," said Mr. Peggotty. "Who is it?" Ham knows, but the others have still to be told. By transferring the question to this second topic Dickens maintains the dramatic tension but avoids repetition, and the interest is held for just the right time. Finally this last piece of information is revealed, and we are shown at one and the same time its varying emotional effects on David and Peggotty.

What we think of this scene will depend upon how much we enjoy such an accumulation of emotions. Even if we think it is overdone in this instance, and too sentimentalised, so far as the artistry is concerned the point to be made is that it is essentially and skilfully dramatic in conception, and modern in technique. Dickens not only carries his story forward, but at the same time shows us almost simultaneously the various emotional reactions of the different characters involved in this action, allowing us to see the action from every angle in rapid succession. What we as readers see is a composite vision shared with Dickens but not with any single one of the characters; and in some such way the novelist transcends the experiences of our ordinary lives, and enables them to be envisaged in their total meaning.

Another scene, quite different but equally characteristic of Dickens, and in many ways superior in its quality of writing, is to be found in Chapter X of *Our Mutual Friend*. It is the story of the quarrel between the Lammles on Shanklin sands, and it is the story of a marital quarrel and reconciliation with a twist. Dickens conducts the arguments with a shrewd perception of masculine and feminine traits, and the interest of the passage is its fusion of scene and dialogue; the opening words create the explosive atmosphere, and bring us into the story at a point where it is clear that a conflict has been in progress and is likely at any moment to be renewed. For the moment there is an air of menacing suspense.

> Mr. and Mrs. Lammle have walked for some time on the Shanklin sands, and one may see by their footprints that they have not walked arm-in-arm, and that they have not walked in a straight track, and that they have walked in a moody humour; for, the lady has prodded little spirting holes in the damp sands before her with her parasol, and the gentleman has

trailed his stick after him. As if he were of the Mephistopheles family indeed, and had walked with a drooping tail.

Observe the exactitude and economy of the writing, the vividness of phrases like "little spirting holes" and "trailed his stick," and above all, the significance that lies behind these details, even down to the final simile. This prepares us for the precision of the first skirmishes between them, in which the dialogue moves, between telling pauses, through the splitting of verbal hairs in a manner not yet hot, but alternately irate and contemptuous; the woman is more indignant, the man more frigid and reasoning.

"Do *I* mean to say!" Mrs. Lammle after a time repeats with indignation. "Putting it on me! The unmanly disingenuousness!"

Mr. Lammle stops, releases his whiskers, and looks at her. "The what?"

Mrs. Lammle haughtily replies, without stopping, and without looking back. "The meanness."

He is at her side again in a pace or two, and he retorts: "That is not what you said. You said disingenuousness."

"What if I did?"

"There is no 'if' in the case. You did."

"I did, then. And what of it?"

This is the everlasting combat of the sexes, in which the real subject of disagreement has not yet appeared, but the woman shows the full range of "feminine resources" in dispute, and the man is typically pedantic. Dickens writes it in a style all the more powerful for its restraint, coming nearer to irony than sarcasm. The tone is set by the deliberate understatement: "Mr. Lammle bestows a by no means loving look upon the partner of his joys and sorrows." The fusion of scene and dialogue then comes to its climax as the argument works up to its own climax, her grim outburst of rage, of which the marine background is a cosmic reflection.

The tide is low, and seems to have thrown them together high on the bare shore. A gull comes sweeping by their heads, and flouts them. There was a golden surface on the brown cliffs but now, and behold they are only damp earth. A taunting roar comes from the sea, and the far-out rollers mount upon one another, to look at the entrapped imposters, and to join in impish and exultant gambols.

The disappearance of the sunlight has revealed the cliffs for what they really are, in the same way as the characters have come to see themselves as they really are; and the ridiculous fact that they are imposters who have imposed upon each other is emphasised by the mockery of the gull and the waves. There is another touch a few moments later that can be read both literally and as a symbol, when she breaks her parasol. The whole passage, in fact, is closely written, with a detail of significance made necessary by the sustained ironic tone, and this irony reserves its most bitter twist to the end.

"Don't be tempted into twitting me with the past knowledge

that you have of me, because it is identical with the past knowledge that I have of you, and in twitting me, you twit yourself, and I don't want to hear you do it. With this good understanding established between us, it is better never done. To wind up all: You have shown temper to-day, Sophronia. Don't be betrayed into doing so again, because I have a Devil of a temper myself."

So, the happy pair, with this hopeful marriage contract thus signed, sealed and delivered, repair homeward.

HATS IN DICKENS

By Frank A. Gibson

I

IN considering that not unimportant article of attire, the hat, in Dickens, we are immediately struck by a peculiarity, a practice, a habit which appears—so to speak—to have stolen away from the modern scene as silently and unnoticed as the proverbial Arab with his tent: I refer to the practice of leaving hats about—anywhere handy but preferably on the floor. It seems improbable that this sort of thing is indulged in much nowadays. We do not deliberately drop, deposit or store our hats on the floor or ground. Yet in almost every other illustration in Dickens you may see a hat so treated. Take *Nicholas Nickleby*. The very first illustration in the book, "Mr. Ralph Nickleby's First Visit to his Poor Relations" shows the surly Ralph holding out his hat to the handsome Nicholas and saying imperiously "Put my hat *down*." It was not necessary to be imperious about it, but down on the floor the hat had to go. In another picture in the same work we notice Mr. Pyke's hat on the carpet beside him, although the observant maid who is going out of the room could easily have picked it up and put it elsewhere. Mr. Pluck's hat, it is true, is not in evidence; possibly he came without one—hence his dishevelled locks. When Mr. Crummles takes his effusive leave of Nicholas, there of course is his hat on the cobbles in front of him; and there is no need to admit that it may have fallen off, any more than Squeers's hat in the plate showing him with Sliderskew, or Gride's at his conference with Ralph, or the forlorn and apparently ownerless hat in the foreground of Nicholas's confrontation of Gride and Ralph. No Dickens scene, as depicted by the incomparable Phiz, seems complete without a hat or two taking the floor. There are two grounded hats in the plate showing the "Magnanimous conduct of Mr. Guppy", and Mr. Guppy's, for good measure, contains his walking stick. Richard's hat and cane are on the ground in the interview with Mr. Vholes, but here the cane seems to have fallen out of the hat. Accidents will happen. But there was no accident with Mr. Mantalini in Ralph Nickleby's office: hat, cane and gloves are on the floor, but they were thrown there by Mr. Mantalini when he heard how much his wife was going to allow him. This is interesting, as showing that the floor was not the invariable

depository of hats in those days. Mantalini had evidently been holding his, up to that moment. There was, indeed, often a marked reluctance to part with hats. Fagin's hat is beside him on the bench in the condemned cell. We hope, politely, that it accompanied him to his last appointment before the prison walls. Sikes is last seen wearing his battered beaver. When the pugnacious cabby in *Pickwick* dashes his hat to the ground, the act is a measure of his extreme desperation. Chadband's is a reception, and there is no sign of his hat; poor Nandy's is only a visit and his hat is therefore at his feet although he is having tea: if he were not, it would of course have been either in his hand or on the floor.

II

On looking further into the matter, we find that " pegs, hooks, nails and hatstands " as Bob Acres might have remarked, were not unknown to those times. The faithful Phiz often shows them. In the plate " Mr. Linkinwater intimates his approval of Nicholas", two hats, presumably those of Nicholas and Tim, adorn the wall of the counting house. There is an undeniable if unseen nail supporting a beaver hat on the wall behind Nicholas as he instructs Smike in the art of acting. There is a whole row of pegs in " The Little Church in the Park " in *Bleak House*; there are hats hanging behind the musicians in the charming and dramatic church interior in *Copperfield*, " Our Pew in Church " headwear odds on the wall here—four to two against the floor; there is a peg or two with a hanging hat in Uncle Sol's little back-parlour —though the inimitable Bunsby's own hat, with his handkerchief in it, is in the more favoured place at his feet. And—supreme triumph!—there is a marble-topped hallstand to receive Mr. Toots's elegant hat and cane when he calls at Mr. Dombey's and " becomes particular".

It must be admitted that there was a certain degree of helplessness with hats in those days. When Traddles dines with Dora and David, his hat is hung on the finger-board of Dora's guitar: when he declaims parliamentary stuff for David's shorthand, his hat reposes on a low footstool in the middle of the room: Mr. Dick's hat and stick more sensibly have found a resting place on a chair.

It would be wrong to suppose that in all this Phiz was not accurately representing Dickens. In *Little Dorrit*, Chapter xxviii, we read that " Mr. Pancks, breathing hard, sidled near the window, put his hat on the ground " . . . and the accompanying plate shows his hat on the table. Phiz having thus—no doubt for reasons connected with the composition of the picture—disregarded the textual instruction to put the hat on the floor.

But the conclusion must be that this peculiar treatment of hats in Dickens—apart from the natural desire to avoid the fashionable farcical situation of sitting on one's own or somebody else's hat—is intimately connected with that other and comparatively obsolete fashion of the " polite call ". In this ritual, as Mr. Maugham has recently reminded us in an interesting broadcast, the caller turned up with all his gear, hat, stick and gloves—" kit complete ", so to

speak, and "all ready to march off", as, after inspection in the salon by some Lady Bracknell or other, he very soon did. Hat-in-hand was the usual form; hat-on-the-floor a great familiarity. Hence the dearth of pegs, the paucity of hooks, the failure of nails, the famine in hall-stands, the special (and sinister) meaning attached to the phrase "hanging up your hat", and the widespread grounding of beavers and "tiles". (Nowadays the tendency is to consider it bad manners not to hang up your hat.)

III

The "tile" is, of course, colloquial for a tall silk hat. Mr. Sparkler "identified 'his governor's tile'" from the window when Mr. Merdle paid his unexpected call and borrowed the tortoiseshell penknife. As the silk hat proper did not become common until about 1830, many of the hats in Dickens must have been of the older kind, the piled beaver. One is even carried by Darnay when he faces the prison tribunal, though earlier on he has the usual cocked hat. There is a fair sprinkling of cocked hats on the ground in this and the other historical novel, but most of them seem to have blown or fallen off—historical accuracy this, no doubt, as the flat tricorn can hardly have been very secure without a hatpin. Dr. Manette's hat has immediately dropped to the ground in "After the Sentence." When the brim of the tricorn was turned down, it became the flat, broad-brimmed beaver worn by Mr. Pickwick, and this was clearly not very secure; witness Mr. Pickwick's hat-chase which led to the happy introduction to the Wardles and his still happier participation in the Christmas festivities at Dingley Dell.

The hangman, Dennis, anticipates later fashion by placing his three-cornered hat, with handkerchief, on the ground beside him while he fascinates the fair Miggs. The blind man, for his part, at Mrs. Rudge's, gives a fig for fashion, and carefully hangs his hat on the back of his chair, where he can easily find it again. This was the ideal solution; on the back of a chair a hat can be neither trodden nor sat upon.

What delightful representations Phiz's pictures for the most part are—whole scenes, not merely a character or two with an empty picture-frame in the background in the modern manner. And the realism! Have you noticed how the candles flicker with the draught from the door as the supercilious footman enters Dombey's dining room? The watchful attitude of the white to the dusky servant is Phiz's idea, or, at least, as with the contrasting picture of Leslie's Uncle Toby and the widow Wadman which is on the wall, there is no immediate reference in the text. Yes, these etchings, in spite of the artist's difficulties and the occasional lapses which Dickens felt so much, are always interesting. If we judge Phiz by his finer moments, we must say he was a fine artist. I would except some, but by no means all, of the special extra plates, the steel engravings Browne made for some of the works.

The hats in this brief survey are of course all men's hats; like their owners, they "await our judgment"; the ladies' hats, like the bard, are in a limited sense "free".

THE BIRTHDAY DINNER IN LONDON

CHARLES CHAPLIN ON "THE IMMORTAL MEMORY OF CHARLES DICKENS"

ON February 7th, the 143rd anniversary of the birth of Charles Dickens, no less than three hundred members of the Fellowship, a record for many years, gathered at the Café Royal to hear MR. CHARLES CHAPLIN propose the toast of the evening, under the chairmanship of the President, THE RT. HON. THE EARL JOWITT.

In introducing the distinguished guest, LORD JOWITT said:

Before we hear Mr. Chaplin pay his tribute to the Immortal Memory of Charles Dickens, I want to say just this.

I am very glad, as President of the Dickens Fellowship, to think that Mr. Chaplin, at my urgent request, has taken the trouble to come a very considerable distance to attend this gathering.

I wonder wherein a great artist, whether his medium be literature, be music, be painting, be acting, or be the screen, I wonder where a great artist differs from we ordinary people. Or perhaps I should say, we ordinary men: I am not going to suggest that any of the women here are, by any means, ordinary. Firstly, what is it, what capacity, what qualities, has a man got to have to join the ranks of the immortals? Well, he's got to have, as Dickens had, a supreme and abounding vitality; he's got to be, it goes without saying, a complete master of his craft, whatever that craft may be; he's got to have acute powers of observation to see things which, to the ordinary person, pass unnoticed; he's got to have a gift, the power of imagination, to think out all sorts of situations; and then, he's got to have, I think, an interest in his fellow man and a supreme concern about the direction in which the world is going. All those things Dickens had; and when I cast about in my mind, on this occasion, to consider who would best pay tribute to Dickens, who would Dickens himself, were he alive to-day, elect to pay this tribute? Looked at from that point of view, well, who better than Mr. Charles Chaplin? Because he is undoubtedly a supreme master of his craft; he has vitality; he has powers of observation; he has, as all artists must have, a great sensitivity. When they are up, they are up in heaven; when they are down, they are in the nethermost hell—there is no sort of average existence for the artist, as there is for the ordinary man. And Mr. Chaplin has shown that he has a great interest in his fellow man and a profound concern at the direction in which the world is going. I do not doubt that those who are burdened with cares, when they have gone to see a Chaplin film, for a time, at any rate, lose those cares. I hope that those who have brutal dispositions, when they have seen a Chaplin film, come out feeling rather less brutal than before. I hope—and this would be a supreme miracle—that those who are inclined to be dictatorial are slightly less dictatorial when they have seen one of his films. And I hope all of you who have seen his criticism of modern life will realise some of the dangers which confront the present generation.

Mr. Chaplin is, I am glad to say, eternally young. It may be

that his hair is slightly whiter than it used to be. Ladies and gentlemen, is that due to old age? No; it is due to the fact that he has lost his bowler hat and has had to expose his locks to the sunlight; and, believe me, that little cane moves round as quickly as ever it did in the old days. Well, we are very proud to have him here to-night.

Now, I shall, in a moment, call upon the Toast Master to do his duty and call upon our guest to-night. Mr. Chaplin has a world-wide appeal. I believe I am right in saying that the appeal of no-one in the world extends over so wide an area, as that of

Photograph] [*"News Chronicle"*

Mr. Charles Chaplin and the Countess Jowitt at the Dickens Birthday Dinner

Mr. Chaplin. The Toast Master will call upon Mr. Charles Chaplin, but for us—for you and for me—he will always be, as he is, Charlie Chaplin, the greatest artist that the screen has produced and, I believe, one of the immortals. It is only fitting that to-day we have an immortal to pay tribute to another great immortal, whose birthday we are gathered to celebrate.

Mr. CHARLES CHAPLIN, who was received with great enthusiasm, said: After such compliments, I am reminded of the story of the widow and her little boy attending the funeral of her husband. The minister was extolling his virtues, saying what a wonderful man he was, what a kind and generous father, what a home-loving, family man. The widow turned to her little boy and said: "Son, I think we have come to the wrong funeral."

I am very happy to be here this evening, to have the honour of proposing the toast to the Immortal Memory of that great master

of letters, Charles Dickens. There is somebody whom I wish were here to-night, because he was a man who was responsible for inspiring, and I should say, enlivening, a young boy's interest in literature. I remember, at the age of eight, when I was with the Eight Lancashire Lads, a troupe of clog dancers, standing in the wings of the Empire Music Hall, Glasgow, and I stood there enthralled, as I watched a world for the first time, a new world of romance, mystery and wonderment, enacted by a very handsome gentleman imitating characters from Charles Dickens. The memory of those moments in the wings has left an indelible impression upon me. The gentleman responsible for those moments, Mr. Bransby Williams, is not here to-night. I am sorry. But I understand he is a little under the weather. Well, he is one of the few persons I can say I remember when a little boy. I used to imitate Bransby Williams's characters from Charles Dickens. I used to imitate the old man from *The Old Curiosity Shop*. The manager saw me and said: "This must be given to the people," and he was so enthusiastic about my performance that he said: "You must appear at the Empire in Middlesbrough." I remember he made a very impassioned speech about the young genius of eight years of age who was going to do the old man from *The Old Curiosity Shop*, who could not recognise death in his little grand-daughter. They bought me a cheap wig with strands of ragged grey hair. I was somewhat small for my age and my very large wig fell about my ears. I came on bent; I must have looked more like a Martian beetle than the old man of the curiosity shop; I came on the stage, and in a voice which could not be heard over the footlights, I remember saying: "Ssh! You must not make a noise, or else you will wake my Nellie," and someone said: "Louder!" and that was the end of my history on the stage.

I am not the best of post-prandial speakers. When on my feet, I usually say the wrong thing. I said the wrong thing at a party I gave twenty-five years ago, when I had the distinction of being introduced by the Rt. Hon. Sir Winston Churchill. Sir Winston, in those days when I saw a great deal of him, was in rather reduced circumstances, that is to say, he had seen better. He had been the Chancellor of the Exchequer, but like all honest Chancellors of the Exchequer, he was eventually reduced to sleeping on the benches of the House of Commons. I remember, however, he became very angry, when he saw some cabinet members go afterwards on a journey, conspicuously carrying umbrellas. It seems to be coming back into fashion again, carrying umbrellas, but now we are going in a westerly direction. However, I am digressing. To go back to the party I gave twenty-five years ago, Sir Winston, with his usual ease and grace, made a very charming speech about the young lad from Lambeth who had conquered America. It was not an anachronism then; it was almost true. However, he wanted to know what I thought about it all, and being unprepared, I was terrified. I wanted to say the right thing and had every good will and intention. As I began: "The late Chancellor of the Exchequer . . ." I heard the voice of Sir Winston say: "I like that! The late Chancellor!" In

my confusion, I changed it to "The Ex-Chancellor of the Exchequer." However, as a late Chancellor of the Exchequer, I think the ghost has since done extremely well.

Of course, I had reservations. Politically, I always have reservations. Naturally, one can't make a Tory out of a lad from Lambeth, not even if he does have a suite at the Savoy Hotel.

However, to get back to the occasion, that is, the toast of the memory of this great man, Charles Dickens, I venture to say, were he alive to-day, he would be critical of our time; he would be critical about our western democracy which, in my humble opinion, is not without its hypocrisy and double talk; wanting peace and, at the same time, urging a race for armaments; unhappily, even more promises of more blood, sweat and tears. He would have been critical of the cold war, because it has achieved nothing, has not determined anything, other than make the whole world neurotic and to give a powerless feeling to our youth. Hate, suspicion and fear are bad things to have in these days of nuclear inventions and the horror weapons. Therefore, I say, I think he would have written eloquently about this matter. He would have been critical of the scientists, of the lack of moral responsibility in handing over the atomic bomb to the military. The mere conception of it is a black mark against the human race. If we are to survive in this day of nuclear energy and these weapons of destruction, we must develop something more than cleverness; we must develop tolerance and kindness for our fellow men. It is not enough to be intellectual, we must have feeling, for the criminologists tell us that intellect and no feeling can be ascribed to the arch-criminals, the Nazis, the Goerings and the Hitlers. In considering a balance of both feeling and intellect in proportion, we can survive, and we can make of this, the nuclear age, a grand and glorious adventure for us all. It was this beautiful balance of intellect and feeling that was the soul of Dickens; it was the essence of his work which he gave to the world. His literary work has added much to the greatness of English letters and to the greatness of England itself. To that greatness I do, with very sincere admiration and love, raise my glass to the undying memory of our beloved Charles Dickens.

The toast of "The Dickens Fellowship" was proposed by Major F. M. Bennett, M.P., to which reply was made by the Rev. George A. Parkinson. "The Health of the Chairman" was honoured after a tribute to him by Miss Vera Brittain, to which Lord Jowitt replied. Mr. John Greaves, Hon. Secretary, gave a recital, "The Courtship of Miss Skiffins," from *Great Expectations*, and songs were rendered by Miss Sheila McShee.

THE BOSTON BRANCH AND *THE DICKENSIAN*

Owing to a regrettable oversight, the generous contribution of the Boston Branch towards the running of *The Dickensian*, was stated in the last number to have been $46. It should have been $56.

IN MEMORIAM

HUMPHRY HOUSE

THE death of Humphry House on the 14th February came as a great shock to all who knew him, and will be deeply regretted by every member of the Fellowship. His loss will most affect those who knew the warmth and vigour of his friendship, but it means much to every student of English literature. To those concerned with the nineteenth century particularly, and with Dickens above all, it is one which nothing can replace.

Arthur Humphry House was born on 22nd May, 1908, and educated at Repton and Hertford College, Oxford. He took a first class honours degree in Litterae Humaniores in 1929, and the following year a second in Modern History. After teaching as an assistant master at Repton School he was in 1931 ordained Deacon of the Church of England and appointed Fellow and Chaplain of Wadham College, Oxford. Finding himself unsuited to the priesthood he relinquished his Chaplaincy, resigned his Deaconship and withdrew from the Church. In 1933 he was invited to take up a special Assistant Lectureship in Classics at University College, Exeter, and from 1936-9 held academic posts in India. In 1940 he was elected William Noble Fellow at the University of Liverpool, but soon afterwards joined the Royal Armoured Corps as a trooper. He was invalided from the service with the rank of Major in 1945. In 1947 he was appointed Director of Studies in English at Peterhouse, Cambridge, and in 1948 University Lecturer in English at Oxford. In 1950 he was made Senior Lecturer and a Fellow of Wadham once more. He delivered the Clark Lectures at Trinity College, Cambridge, 1951-2.

Even such a bare outline may suggest some of his outstanding qualities. Yet to enlarge on it by saying that he was strongly sincere, kind, strict, generous, deeply-learned, conscientious, ready to devote himself without reserve to any work or cause he believed in, is to fall far short of describing his strength and geniality. Many of his qualities are to be found in his books. His scholarship and sensitive discrimination as an editor were shown in the *Notebooks and Papers of Gerard Manley Hopkins* (1937), and a wise

judgement and critical insight in the Clark Lectures, published as *Coleridge* (1953). A new and greatly enlarged edition of the *Notebooks and Papers* and a biography, *The Early Life of Gerard Manley Hopkins*, were almost completed at the time of his death.

Every reader of *The Dickensian* will be familiar with some of his work on Dickens, whether in his books, reviews, broadcast talks, or, too seldom, within these pages. They were all marked by a strong intellectual integrity, and by an interest in the relation between the novels and the thought and social life of the period. This special historical insight came from a great breadth of knowledge and a real sympathy with the moods and beliefs of the age, which ensured the permanent value of his writings on Dickens.

His chief published work in this field was *The Dickens World* (1941), written when a new value was beginning to be set on Dickens as a novelist. The essays by George Orwell and Edmund Wilson were published at much the same time: both of them House sincerely admired. To all three critics, reading Dickens during the troubled nineteen-thirties, and writing about him under the shadow of war, he appeared as a fundamentally serious writer, deeply concerned for the liberty of the individual. The corrected typescript of *The Dickens World* was lost when it was sent to America for safe keeping in 1940, and House had to correct a carbon copy from memory, sitting on his army bunk far from all books.

Of his short studies the Introduction to *Oliver Twist* (1949) set a high standard for the New Oxford Illustrated Dickens. The same year were published three talks in a B.B.C. Third Programme series on *The Ideas and Beliefs of the Victorians*. These went beyond Dickens. It is good to know that the best of House's broadcasts are shortly to be published (together with his *Dickensian* and other articles), for they were always thoughtful and shrewdly expressed.

His greatest work on Dickens would undoubtedly have been the complete edition of the letters which was begun in 1949. Unhappily, much still remains to be done, and much of that will never achieve the high standard that it would have reached had he lived. He saw the edition as no mere compilation of scattered texts and manuscripts, but as a work that would illuminate the whole mid-Victorian scene. In his hands it would have done. To Carlyle editing was "literary navvying", but although no one knew better than House the hard labour involved, he saw that it should demand critical insight, vivid powers of expression, and the most expert and detailed research. Yet however greatly the work will suffer without him, his greatest contribution at this stage was his masterly gift for organisation, and the work he had completed was already a major contribution to English scholarship.

This makes it particularly fitting that he should be remembered here, although he detested the idea of being known simply as a "Dickens Scholar". He always set his face against any form of limited specialisation, and was convinced that Dickens must either be studied as a great novelist, or dismissed almost altogether. He had the deepest respect for Dickens as an author, and none at all

for those who used him as an excuse for writing irrelevancies about subjects remote from the novels.

By House's death we have lost a great scholar, and a warm-hearted friend. To his wife and three children, all the members of the Fellowship will wish to extend their deep and sincere sympathy.

K.J.F.

THE MEMORANDUM BOOK, FORSTER & *EDWIN DROOD*[1]

By Pansy Pakenham

MR. FELIX AYLMER'S explorations among Dickens's original memoranda, throw an interesting light on Forster's editorial methods, though, in my opinion, these have little bearing on *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*, nor do they prove that Forster's claim to be Dickens's literary confidant was false.

If his accuracy had been impeccable in every other instance, his mis-statements about the Drood entry would justify one's suspicions, but, as Mr. Aylmer shows, this is far from being the case. To take the lists of names, for example, and the titles for books – Forster not only states that he has given them in the order they occur, but that they all come at the end of the Memoranda. As a matter of fact, there are two separate lists of names, one near the beginning and one near the end, which he has mixed together in blocks of about twenty consecutive names, while the book-titles are in a third place. Again, he says that the entry about " the unwieldy ship taken in tow by the snorting little steam tug ", is the last reference to *Little Dorrit* in the Memoranda, when it is the first entry in the whole book.

Such glaring inaccuracy would have been impossible if Forster had written with the manuscript in front of him. I suggest that at some stage of his work, he copied (or had copied by an amanuensis) the contents of the book on to loose pieces of paper which he later re-arranged from memory. The question then arises why he should have been so precise about unimportant details if he were not prepared to verify his references. An examination of his character, methods of work and condition of health may provide an explanation. It is worth noting that in his biography of Walter Savage Landor (1869) he had already grappled with the biography of an author recently dead to whom he had been literary confidant and executor, and whose marriage had ended in discord and scandal. For both biographies, Forster had chiefly relied on the mass of letters in his possession, though for the first sixty years of Landor's life, he had to use those addressed to others. Both books are therefore edited autobiographies with a critical commentary, rather than objective biographies, and have the merits and faults of this type of work. One hears the genuine voice of the subject, speaking to an intimate friend, and the friend's first-hand reminiscences, but one does not see the subject in any other relationship. This exclusiveness on the part of

[1] I am indebted to Dr. K. J. Fielding for lending me the microfilm of the memorandum book and to the authorities of the New York Public Library for allowing me to use it to check a transcript of the original MS, made by Mrs. Comyns Carr.

Forster is particularly marked in the case of Dickens, where, except for a few (probably unsolicited) anecdotes from schoolfellows, no outside material has been used, and no research undertaken. Yet enquiries at Chatham or from Dickens's sister, Mrs. Austin, might have thrown much light on his childhood, while Tom Beard and others could have given details about reporting days. That Forster should have confined himself to a scissors-and-paste selection of manuscript material which he afterwards destroyed, was due as much to possessiveness and pride as to fatigue and ill-health, while his pedantic noting of time and place suggests a bluff of scholarly precision to conceal a ricketty foundation.

In any case, nineteenth-century biographers had none of the modern reverence for their subject's literary remains and did not hesitate to cut, alter and amalgamate letters as it suited their editorial purposes. For instance, in his *Life of Landor*, Forster describes a dinner party on January 30th, 1849, where a conversation between Forster, Dickens and Landor on Epicurus inspired the famous quatrain " I strove with none "—and then makes Landor admit the unepicurean tears he has shed over *David Copperfield* (of which the first number had not yet appeared) while Dickens goes on to point out that there is nothing in *Robinson Crusoe* to make anyone laugh or cry, in words taken verbatim from a letter to Landor he did not write till 1856 !

Similar editorial high-handedness could explain Forster's misleading statements about *Edwin Drood*. Dickens's description of " the boy and girl, pledged very young—and going apart ", may have been given verbally to Forster, the more probably as the letter he claims to quote is vaguely placed in " July ", while in the next, carefully dated " August 6th, 1869 ", Dickens says—" I laid aside the fancy I told you of, and have a very curious and new idea for a story." When Forster was scanning the Memorandum book and came on " the boy and girl, etc. ", he might have recalled the conversation, copied out the entry for his chapter on *Edwin Drood*, and then have forgotten about it. When he said that no entries were made after 1865, he was probably correct, as one of the last refers to *Our Mutual Friend*, while his declaration that Dickens did not use the book after that date was more likely due to carelessness than to a desire to conceal his ignorance of the Drood mystery. To give the idea for a plot which Dickens had abandoned would hardly support a claim to be in his confidence, and if Forster wished to mislead, he could have produced something more convincing. Moreover, he has printed several references to *Edwin Drood* from the Memoranda, without noticing them—the ancedote about " the gas going under the jistes ", repeated with little variation by the Billickin, the pun on " the pen-and-ink-ubus " and the note on the " old child, born of parents advanced in life and therefore advanced in life himself ", echoed by Mr. Grewgious. These oversights, as well as several others, having references to different stories, prove that Forster's dogmatic assertions are no guarantee of his reliability about details, but do not affect his claim to have enjoyed Dickens's confidence to the end.

I suspect Mr. Aylmer of a desire to sap Forster's authority in order to give freer scope to amateurs of the Drood mystery, a liberty particularly welcome to those, like Mr. Bleifuss, who have decided that Edwin is not dead. Nevertheless there is one item in Forster's version of the plot which he could not have deduced from the manuscript or the notes, and which must have been imparted to him by Dickens himself. The importance of the ring given by Mr. Grewgious to Edwin, is emphasised in the text, but the heap of quicklime near Durdles's house would never have been connected with it, unless Forster had enlightened us. It is as unlikely that he would have spontaneously thought of the ring resisting the corrosive effects of the lime, as that Dickens would have invented such an elaborate false trail for the private benefit of Forster.

Moreover, there is other first-hand evidence for Edwin's death in a letter written by Charles Collins to Augustin Daly who wished to dramatise the book. Though not published till 1919 (in a biography of Daly, and in *The Dickensian* of the same year) it was written in May, 1871, only eighteen months after the cover had been designed, when it was still fresh in the artist's mind. The six numbers of the novel had been published but Forster's biography had not yet appeared, so could not have influenced Collins. As this letter has been oddly neglected by Drood detectives, a copy may be of general interest.

> " Dear Sir. The late Mr. Dickens communicated to me some general outlines for his scheme of Edwin Drood, but it was at a very early stage in the development of the idea, and what he said bore mainly upon the earlier portions of the tale.
>
> Edwin Drood was never to reappear, he having been murdered by Jasper. The girl Rosa, not having been really attached to Edwin, was not to lament his loss very long, and was, I believe, to admit the sailor, Mr. Tartar, to supply his place. It was intended that Jasper himself should urge on the search after Edwin Drood and the pursuit of the murderer, thus endeavouring to direct suspicion from himself, the real murderer. This is indicated in the design on the right side of the cover of the figures hurrying up the spiral staircase, emblematical of a pursuit. *They are led on by Jasper who points unconsciously to his own figure in the drawing at the head of the title* (my italics). The female figure at the left of the cover, reading the placard ' Lost ', is only intended to illustrate the doubt entertained by Rosa Bud as to the fate of her lover, Drood. The group beneath it indicates the acceptance of another suitor.
>
> As to any further theory, it must be purely conjectural. It seems likely that Rosa would marry Mr. Tartar and possible that the same destiny might await Mr. Crisparkle and Helena Landless. Young Landless himself was to die, perhaps, and Jasper certainly would, though whether by falling into the hands of justice or by suicide or through taking an overdose of opium which seems most likely, it is impossible to say."

It will be seen that Collins carefully distinguishes between what he had been told (contained in the second paragraph) and what he

had deduced from the printed text, and that he was ignorant of much which Forster later revealed. On the other hand, certain situations would have to be explained to him if he were to design the cover to the author's satisfaction. He also makes clear that the pictures represent leading themes in the story, and not particular incidents, so that readers have been led astray who have tried to interpret them literally. They should be compared with those on the monthly cover of *Our Mutual Friend*,[1] where though it is difficult to identify all the figures (even with the aid of a letter of instruction from Dickens to Marcus Stone) the various scholastic emblems suggest that the educational theme is more important than one might deduce from the text. So, in Collins's cover, the reader must not look for a key to the plot but for the significance of certain characters and situations which would have been only fully apparent if the book had been finished. The sentence I have italicised from Collins's letter supports the theory (first propounded by Montagu Saunders, in 1914) that " the very curious and new idea " was to have been the pursuit and destruction of Jasper *by himself*. At the end of the fourth number, when Jasper shows his diary to Mr. Crisparkle, the words " I devote myself to his destruction ", mark a shift of interest in the story from Edwin's fate to Neville's. Jasper, obsessed by his passion for Rosa, is not merely trying to conceal his guilt but to convict Neville of the murder. Without this purpose and his consequent activity, the corpse would have remained forever undiscovered while the story would have stagnated hopelessly for two-thirds of its length.

It is disappointing that Collins makes no mention of the bottom picture in his letter, but if its emblematical nature is taken into account it can be understood as simply guaranteeing that light will finally be thrown on the Drood mystery—not as indicating whether Edwin is alive or dead, or someone else in disguise. It is doubtful whether the figure with the lantern is meant for Jasper, as the clerical coat and curly hair suggest Mr. Crisparkle as shown in the illustrations rather than Jasper who always wears a short frock-coat and has long, straight hair. It also is more appropriate that the good minor Canon, rather than the evil Jasper, should throw a light on the surrounding darkness. It is true that the illustrations were done by Luke Fildes, but it seems probable that he touched up the cover as well, though he did not know its import, as in Collins's first sketch the figures have a puppet-like quality compared to the rather heavy realism of the published cover.[2]

Be that as it may, there is no reason to doubt Collins's testimony as far as it goes, any more than Forster's or Luke Fildes's. The incredulity they have met is largely due to the inability of readers to remember that Dickens did not mean to leave his book half-finished. The mystery was to have titivated their curiosity for twelve months, not for eighty-five years, while a more permanent interest would have remained with the characters, who would have developed in different proportions than in the present

[1] This cover is reproduced in the MacMillan edition, recently reprinted.
[2] An indecisive discussion on Fildes's share in the cover design with a reproduction of Collins's first sketch was published in *The Dickensian* in 1929.

truncated work. Edwin, for instance, would have become a fading memory by the time his body was discovered, Tartar would be much more prominent, while Datchery might seem a comparatively minor figure when no longer featuring in the closing pages. Incidentally, I see no reason why Datchery should not be a new character. The cast needs enlarging, he occurs no later in the book than Tartar, while the white wig could be merely a means to enable a young man to pose as an elderly buffer. To suppose that Helena, Grewgious or Bazzard could so easily disguise themselves in broad daylight and could also suddenly become brilliant character actors, is to turn a realistic drama into a farcical harlequinade.

Edwin Drood is not one of Dickens's fantastic, nostalgic recreations of his childhood like *Great Expectations* but a penetrating view of types and scenes very close to him in time and space. Mr. Crisparkle the muscular Christian, is a new kind of clergyman, the young people are contemporaries of Dickens's sons and daughters, not memories of his old friends and loves, the opium den was a recent discovery, Cloisterham is Rochester seen from Gadshill Place, not the Rochester of Pip or Mr. Pickwick. Dickens's style, too, seems modernised—more crisp, selective and condensed. Only his moral attitude is unchanged—his love of courage and innocence, his hatred of cant and cruelty, while his obsession with flight and pursuit has become even more pronounced. To Mr. Crisparkle, Neville and Helena Landless had the air of being, at the same time, both the hunters and the quarry, and if Jasper also was to pursue himself, the pattern of *Edwin Drood* can be seen as a series of circles, where murderers, victims and avengers chase each other continuously and end by finding themselves.

A FORGOTTEN BOOK

Extracts from a Talk on *A Child's History of England* given to The Dickens Fellowship in London

By Dennis Birch

MAY we begin by seeing what the critics, past and present, have had to say about this little-known book. Here one certainly has some rude shocks in store. From Forster to the present day the critics have either refrained from comment altogether or have been generally derogatory.

Forster remarks of the history that " Dickens cannot be said to have quite hit the mark with it ". This criticism might have been more useful if Forster had indicated exactly what Dickens was aiming at. In any event Forster's criticism was always of a negative kind. It was merely enough for Dickens to propose something for Forster to oppose it and vice versa.

Coming to more modern biographers Dame Una Pope-Hennessy comments on its " shallow and vituperative judgments ". I do not know whether Dame Una considered that the right place to look for profound and sober judgments is in a book especially designed for children—but there it is.

Mr. Jack Lindsay in his study of Dickens from a psychological angle, published a few years ago, terms it as crude and summary. Whether one can be anything else but summary in a book which crams 2,000 years of history in just over 250 pages seems to me doubtful.

Chesterton, who, in the period of re-action against the great Victorians in which he lived, was ever one of Dickens's most redoubtable champions, in this case sides with the writers I have already mentioned. He says of the history: " . . . in almost every sense it detracts from the creator's fame ". He then proceeds to compare it with " Pictures of Italy " and points out that the author's travels were not travels in Italy but travels in Dickensland. " Similarly in the history he was not travelling in distant lands but in distant ages—a sturdy, sentimental Radical with a large heart and a narrow mind ". Chesterton goes on to complain that Dickens regarded contemporary questions as the eternal questions and the latest word as the last. He could not help seeing the remotest peaks lit up by the raging bonfire of his own passionate political crisis. He lived in an eternal present. It is indeed a child's history of England but the child is the writer and not the reader."

Hard words indeed—but I think it is only fair to mention that certain aspects of Dickens's mind and personality which were particularly calculated to aggrandise a writer of Chesterton's views on religious and political matters appear in this book far more than in the novels—and this fact, more than the book itself may have led to Chesterton's drastic and dramatic condemnation.

Hesketh Pearson, like the others, has nothing good to say about the history, and merely remarks that Dickens was too ardent to make a sound historian. Dickens's latest biographer, Mr. Edgar Johnson, although he mentions the book on a number of occasions, perhaps wisely refrains from comment.

Before we ourselves examine the book in detail, I think that we should make some attempt to ascertain exactly what Dickens's purpose was in writing this book.

One may assume that it originated in the first place in his perfectly natural desire to amuse first his eldest son, and then the other elder members of the family on a wet day or when Mrs. Dickens could no longer stand the noise of communal cricket, archery, or rounders—and also to acquaint them with the elementary facts of the rough island story possibly illuminated by a gentle liberal light. In addition he would take the opportunity of inculcating one or two moral and ethical lessons which would not come amiss—a task from which few Victorian parents could refrain for very long.

Apparently the stories were a success with the audience in the nursery or in the schoolroom whichever it was, at any rate from the narrator's point of view, and the gratified parent and author felt that they might be equally successful with a larger audience of the same age in other homes where the pater-familias would be only too glad to be saved the trouble of inventing his own bed-time stories by making use of Mr. Dickens's welcome assistance.

I think these facts should be borne in mind as one might think

from some of the criticism that the book has had to endure that Dickens had tried to endow it with a distillation of his whole philosophy—that it was a personal apologia instead of a collection of tales to beguile twenty drowsy minutes round the nursery fire.

Next may we have a look at the schoolroom bookshelf and see what it contained at the beginning of the 1850s. How thinly populated, forbidding and unattractive it looks as compared with the well-filled, colourful shelves of to-day. No Lewis Carroll, no *Treasure Island* or *Kidnapped*, no R. M. Ballantyne or G. A. Henty, no *Wind in the Willows*, no *Jungle Books*, no Arthur Ransome, no Enid Blyton. Charles Kingsley was still at school himself. Sherlock Holmes at that time must have been in the cradle. It was years before those eminent Victorian Ladies—Mrs. Molesworth, Mrs. Ewing, or Mrs. Hodgson Burnett would entrance the Nursery World with *Carrots, A Flat Iron for a Farthing*, or the exploits of the immortal Fauntleroy.

What in fact was there apart from some very heavy lesson books in every sense of the word? Some fairy tales - the Brothers Grimm had arrived in the 'twenties, followed by the Dickens family's own friend Hans Andersen in the 'forties.

Captain Marryat may have found his way to the Dickens bookshelf—*Gulliver's Travels* and *Sandford and Merton* may have been there, Lamb's *Tales from Shakespeare* may have been a favourite in the family. I do not know whether they had heard of Scott's *Tales of a Grandfather*.

The only books which one could be sure to find in profusion were little volumes of moral instruction containing such powerful passages as "a child should always rise from his meal with his appetite unsatisfied. The enervating and corrupting pleasures of the table are the worst snare that Satan spreads before a young person. There is a late Roman degeneracy in the spectacle of a gorging infant. Thus do Empires fall".

It is against this background that the history has to be examined. In composing his stories Dickens had to contend with a number of difficulties. First as will be clear to the least erudite student of the problem, owing to the exigencies of nature all the members of the Dickens family were of different ages, and therefore the tales, in the first instance, had to be suited to an audience of very different levels of attainment.

Secondly, any book written to please and entertain children is somewhat of a gamble—and if before you begin, you have handicapped yourself with a subject that seems to many children a boring conglomeration of dates and place names—it will be more difficult still.

Thirdly, if in addition to all these problems you also burden yourself with the necessity of pointing out moral truths and precepts on every possible occasion—the task would seem to be well nigh an impossibility. The path of the lecturer on morals to any type of audience—however admirable a profession—is always a thankless one as Mr. Chadband eventually discovered.

Lastly—there is the usual difficulty in the presentation of history generally, how to present it, in what form, from what angle, how is one to be fair to characters who are anathema to one, what is

one to include from the vast hotch-potch before one, and even more difficult, what can one leave out?

I wonder how far you think Dickens has solved these problems in this book—in particular is it a book that children would enjoy? How terribly difficult it is to say with any certainty what children will enjoy—the only thing that one can say is that one can generally rely on their enjoying what one would least expect.

Then, again, how long will children enjoy the same thing? Is *Alice* the favourite it was in the nurseries of the 'nineties or was it perhaps a book for children that actually always appealed most to the grown-ups, like Hornby trains that are monopolised by mechanically-minded fathers. Will *Winnie the Pooh* and *Eeyore* survive in the welter of comics, bloods, and puffins that pour from the presses? Have stories of atomic scientists and space ships entirely ousted the Pirates, Red Indians, and Amateur Cricketers of the heyday of *Chums*, *Chatterbox*, *The Captain* and *The Boys' Own Paper*.

I wonder if *Coral Island*, *The Children of the New Forest*, and *Tom Brown* are as popular to-day as when they first enchanted the schoolrooms of fifty or was it a hundred years ago?

Turning to the presentation of history itself, any number of problems present themselves immediately. In writing history for children it is a matter of extreme difficulty to steer a middle course between pure amusement, which often tends to mere facetious chit-chat, and a heavy mass of dates, reigns, and battles. How to impart instructions without the child reader or listener being aware that it is being done, is surely one of the great problems of any writer in this field. Perhaps the greatest danger here, is starting with a pre-conceived idea of what children ought to like. This has been a common attitude amongst writers from very early times indeed.

Bunyan wrote a book for boys and girls which was calculated to encourage them to keep watch against sin. *The Fairchild Family* was intended to show the beneficial effects of a religious education, while Mrs. Pilkington's *Historical Beauties for Young Ladies* was intended to lead the female mind to the love and practice of moral goodness.

Maria Edgworth on the other hand, recommended that " precept should be blended with an alloy of nonsense ". In his recent work on English children's books, Mr. Percy Muir remarks that Messrs. Kingston, Ballantyne and Henty had progressed considerably beyond Miss Edgworth's alloy of nonsense. He writes: " They appeared to entertain, to spin a yarn, but thro' the bellying sails, the gunshot smoke, in the wastes of Hudson Bay or deep in the gorilla-haunted jungle, can be discerned a moral purpose, firm as a rock."

How far Dickens successfully negotiated the many difficulties we have mentioned we can decide when we examine the book in a little more detail. When we do this we realise that Dickens certainly did not have any brief résumé of history in mind—no light booklet, containing the minimum of print and the maximum of illustration as is so often the case to-day. No, despite the fact that the work was apparently finished off in a hurry—even cut

short arbitrarily—we still have a thick volume of 125,000 words with which to confront any child who imagines he is going to be taught his history the easy way.

It is hard to think of any particular book with which we can compare it—possibly Lamb's *Tales from Shakespeare* may be similar or Scott's *Tales of a Grandfather*. The first of these two books is a minor masterpiece in this particular vein but the Lambs were concerned solely with telling some of the greatest stories in the world in a simple and direct manner and were not concerned with the inculcation of moral precepts or liberal principles.

We know little about the actual writing of the book. We do know from a letter written in 1843 that Dickens had then started writing a short history for his eldest son. What happened to this MS. we do not know. The next thing we know is that the history began appearing in *Household Words* in 1851. I have had the advantage of Mr Edgar Johnson's advice on this point but it is not at all clear whether in fact the two books were the same—whether the second was a re-writing and amplification of the first—or whether the second book was entirely a separate production. The actual history itself must have been begun sometime in 1850 and in January, 1851 it began appearing irregularly in *Household Words*. By 1853 125,000 words had been dictated, an employment which overlapped the composition of *Bleak House*.

One must remember that *Hard Times* followed close on the heels of *Bleak House*. During this period Dickens also produced *The Seven Poor Travellers* and *Boots at the Holly Tree Inn*, so it is clear that his superabundant energies and creative powers were being taxed to their utmost if not beyond.

In his admirable little book on Dickens in the Brief Lives series, Mr Bernard Darwin points out that this period was the prelude to the final rift with Mrs. Dickens and suggests that it is from this time that a certain tiredness and exhaustion begins to reveal itself both in his work and in his mental and creative powers—not, of course, the collapse caused later by the gargantuan efforts of the reading tours but a slowing down of the creative processes, a scarcely perceptible decrease of vitality. Writing to Forster about this time, he makes the somewhat sad and wistful remark: "The spring does not seem to fly back again directly as it always did when I put my own work aside and had nothing else to do." The resilience of youth had largely gone.

The whole work was unique as far as the method of composition was concerned in that much of the book was dictated to Georgina Hogarth. This fact indeed is a great tribute to her patience and devotion, for it must have been a herculean task for one who was not trained in such work.

As far as we know Dickens based the book on a work called *Keightley's History*, and devoted his spare time to its writing. This assumption is based on the fact that Dickens had in his library a copy of the history—many passages of which he had marked. Many of these paragraphs correspond in so many ways with similar paragraphs in the history that the resemblance could hardly be accidental. Keightley was a minor nineteenth century

historian. An Irishman by birth he lived from 1789 to 1872. Nothing came amiss to his pen from a *History of India* to a book on fairies. His *History of England* which Dickens used was published in three volumes from 1837 to 1839. In his preface Keightley, foreshadowing our modern problems, remarks that in those days people had no time to read voluminous works and wanted books of a moderate size. The only moderate sized *History of England* was that written by Goldsmith of whom apparently Mr. Keightley had a rather poor opinion. Mr. Keightley's book would thus fill a much needed want. It is interesting to note that his idea of a moderately sized work was three volumes of well over 500 pages each apart from notes.

Many interruptions held up the writing of the book varying in nature from the preparations for one of Dickens's most elaborate ventures in the theatre, the production of Bulwer Lytton's play, *Not so bad as we seem* (or *Not so good as we ought to be*, as it was called at rehearsals)—to a company of dogs who used to gather in Tavistock Square each morning and bark for several hours without stopping, thus completely putting an end to literary composition for the time being. This interruption was finally overcome by a few charges of small shot.

Dickens was much troubled by disturbances of this kind throughout his career. I believe it was the itinerant street musicians and their organs who eventually drove the Dickens family from Broadstairs.

It is somewhat interesting to note that the profits from *Household Words* declined very sharply during the period while the last instalments of the *History* were appearing, they were only £528 for the six months which ended on the 30th September, 1853. It was not until *Hard Times* began to appear in April, 1854, that the fortunes of the magazine started to revive—whether or not there was any connection between the publication of the *History* and the magazines decline in popularity it is extremely difficult to say. After three years, however, readers were possibly becoming a little restive, and their early enthusiasm for a children's guide to history may have been starting to flag.

The book was first published by Bradbury and Evans in book form in three yearly volumes in 1852, 1853, and 1854, dedicated to his own children. It was reprinted in the Charles Dickens Edition dedicated to Forster in 1868-70. It also appeared in Chapman and Hall's Library Edition in 1857-1859.

With all its loads of puns, anecdotes, and general historical bric-a-brac the book ambles gently along until it is suddenly cut short at the Glorious Revolution in order, so it is said, that the author would be free to hurry off on a tour of Italy with Augustus Egg and Wilkie Collins.

(*To be continued*)

RECENT DICKENSIANA

"Dickens's Creative Art," Valentina Ivashova. Moscow University Publishing House.

"A Charles Dickens Original," Russell Fraser. *Nineteenth Century Fiction*. March.

PLAYS FROM THE CHRISTMAS NUMBERS OF *HOUSEHOLD WORDS*

By Malcolm Morley

I.

HOUSEHOLD WORDS, the weekly journal conducted by Charles Dickens, was in existence from 1850 to 1858. Every Christmas from 1850 a special number was issued wherein Dickens and others contributed stories related, more or less, sometimes not at all, to the Season. These Christmas Numbers, eight in all, contained a number of tales that were to provide material for the stage.

The contents of the first four of these Annuals were mostly descriptive accounts of Christmas and its associations; of how it affected the lives of different people, particularly of those participating in the seasonal festivities. Several of the contributions were devoted to ghosts, a perennial Yuletide subject. Dickens wrote *A Christmas Tree* and *What Christmas is as we grow Older* for the 1850 and 1851 Annuals and the 1852 issue had two sensitive essays from his pen, *The Poor Relation's Story* and *The Child's Story*. None of these had sufficient substance for the theatre. Neither had his articles in the 1853 Number, *The Schoolboy's Story* and *Nobody's Story*.

The Extra Number of *Household Words* for 1854 was entirely occupied with *The Seven Poor Travellers* which was really a compilation of seven stories, each being told by one of the travellers resting at the establishment known as Watts' Charity in Rochester. Dickens furnished the framework for the collection and wrote the first story, that of the soldier Richard Doubledick. The remaining six tales were the work of various authors, G. A. Sala, Adelaide Proctor, Wilkie Collins and Miss Lyn. The tales, some in prose, some in verse, were not otherwise related. They were set down as the different narrations of people sheltering in the Charity. Several plays derived from this Annual appeared in the Minor theatres shortly after publication and there was something like competition as to how many of the seven tales could be jumbled together into one stage production. Richard Doubledick, figured conspicuously in the majority of the plays taken from the publication. He served as the king pin, as it were, of a drama introducing in some manner or other, the people of the various tales. These characters were either to participate in the action or decorate the scene in respectful attendance. A dream sequence was one of the ways of bringing them together, Doubledick being the dreamer.

The first London Theatre to put on *The Seven Poor Travellers* was the Surrey where a version by John Beer Johnstone with the subtitle of *Fireside Stories of a Christmas Eve* was given on January 29th, 1855. The background scenes were laid in Rochester where in the Watts Home the travellers' tales were related. At that date the Surrey was under the joint management of William Creswick and Richard Shepherd, a long and successful partnership. Creswick was a tragedian with the leading Shakespearian

rôles at his command. Conversely, Shepherd's line was heavies and elaborated character parts. Between them they covered a wide range of theatrical territory. The Surrey was a flourishing playhouse where Shakespeare was interspaced with gory melodrama and screaming farce. There was no part for Creswick in *The Seven Poor Travellers* but Shepherd had matter in the blackmailing Alfred Davager, a character in the Poor Lawyer's tale. The redoubtable Doubledick was the lot of Montague Smythson, a hero of Victorian melodrama, while Andrew Pitts was the name given to a part which allowed Henry Widdicomb, the resident low comedian, to play for laughs.

HENRY WIDDICOMB

Courtesy: Victoria and Albert Museum.

On the following February 3rd a compendium of *The Seven Poor Travellers* was produced at the Victoria in the nearby Waterloo Road. It was in three acts with nine tableaux. Four of the scenes were allotted to the episode of Doubledick acted by N. T. Hicks (Brayvo 'icks) who seems to have been responsible for the arrangement of the piece. A drama bearing the same name but adding the subtitle of *Life's Faults and Follies* next came to the Pavilion in the East End on February 9th. Characters connected with all the tales were among the *dramatis personae* in this anonymous version. The players included E. Courtney as Doubledick and Mrs. E. Courtney as Mary in the Widow's story. John Saunders enacted Acon-Verlaz in the Shipwright's story, Samuel Sawford was the Poor Lawyer and Marion Lacey was the young Sailor Boy (called Henry in this version). A slight digression may be admissable here to note the fact that Sawford was the first actor and Marian Lacey the first actress to play Jo, the crossing sweeper, in adaptations of *Bleak House*.

The title of *The Seven Poor Travellers* remained with other unassigned adaptations produced during the early months of 1855: at the Standard on February 10th, at the Marylebone on February 20th, and at the Grecian on March 12th. Of special interest in connection with the Marylebone production is the number of Robertsons appearing in the cast. They were all near relations of Tom the dramatist: his father, his mother, his brother and his sister. The play illustrated the first six tales of the book

in rotation: the last in the collection was left out. It was the one of the Book Pedlar, a verse description of the frenzied ride of a Swiss Girl on a fiery steed to warn the people of her native city they were to be treacherously attacked by enemy forces. An equestrian act would have been needed to stage the story—and perhaps an Adah Menken. The Robertson family were kept busy at the Marylebone. William, the senior, appeared first as Ben Duoud in the Shipwright's story and then as Alfred Davager in the Lawyer's story. His wife was seen as Mrs. Taunton in the Doubledick sequence and later as the Countess in the Sailor Boy's story. Master Robertson (aged eleven) and Miss Robertson (aged seven) were the children in the Watchmaker's story. The boy was the little man landlord and the girl his blind sister in this touching scene. On the playbill they were given the names of Johnnie and Jeannie. Master Robertson was Edward Shafto who was to die, in 1871, at a comparatively early age, in the same year as his more famous brother, the author of *Caste*. Miss Robertson was Madge, afterwards Mrs. Kendal, one of the greatest actresses of her generation.

Turning to the provinces there is record of *The Seven Poor Travellers*, presumably a Benefit Performance, at Nottingham on December 16th, 1856, and of a version, still with the same title, at the Theatre Royal, Blackburn, on January 11th, 1869. Though attributed to Charles H. Duval, the play was patterned after the Johnstone adaptation and used the names given by that dramatist to some of the characters: Andrew Pitts, Desborough Darkdown, Chester Charity and Bessie Moulton. It must have been an adaptation of an adaptation. Duval had a certain reputation as a Mimic, Vocalist and Elocutionist. His one-man Entertainment labelled "Odds and Ends" made full use of these varied talents.

What purported to be a new dramatisation of *The Seven Poor Travellers* at the Victoria on April 14th, 1874, was no more than a re-issue of the Johnstone version. It was hard to recognise the characters the way they were turned and turned about. Mary in the Widow's story was paired off with Captain Taunton in the Doubledick history while Tom, the lad in the Lawyer's story, was transformed into Walter, the little Sailor Boy. The Book Pedlar, under the name of Andrew Pitts, was made to discover the secret hiding place of the letter used for blackmail by Davager who was now the accomplice of the forger (set down as Harry Desborough) and numbered among his victims Acon-Virlaz the dreaming Jew seeking treasure in the sky. All of which was very confusing making mincemeat of the original.

The Widow's story that figured in *The Seven Poor Travellers* was written by Miss Lyn (Mrs. Lyn Lynton, from whom Dickens purchased Gad's Hill). Disassociated from the other tales it was dramatised and produced as *The Dead Witness: or, Sin and its Shadow* at the Theatre Royal, Sheffield, on November 16th, 1853. The drama, in three acts, was announced as "by Wybert Reeve from Charles Dickens." None of the contributions to *Household Words* were signed and Reeve's assumption that this particular story was by Charles might be a natural mistake. The human note is absent from the heavyweight drama concerned with Henry

Vernon and his misdeeds. He is a coiner whose wife, Mary, is a simple soul having no suspicion of his covert occupation. When Mary's sister Ellen arrives, Vernon immediately professes love for her though she gives him not the slightest encouragement. Instead she charges him with being a counterfeiter, an accusation which so incenses him that he stabs her to death. However, Ellen is not out of action. She is the dead witness and makes ghostly appearances to tell of her fate. To Mary she reveals the secret chamber where lie the proofs of Vernon's illegal work and matrimonial duplicity. The play ends with the wicked fellow being shot by a confederate, Alfred Davager, one anxious to reap a reward for his apprehension. Davager, be it observed, is the name of the blackmailer who figures in the Lawyer's story and is not in the original Widow's story.

Another stage work devoted to one alone of the seven tales of the travellers was *Doubledick; or, Friendship and Love*, a three-act drama by West Digges, produced at the Theatre Royal, Halifax, on October 18th, 1875. It was founded on the opening story in the collection, that by Dickens, and was the chronicle of John Doubledick. First the youthful reprobate, then the valorous soldier, the wounded warrior of Waterloo: finally the man of middle years, happily married and at peace with the world, including reconciliation with the French officer responsible for the death in battle of his great friend and benefactor, Captain Taunton. The ages and stages of Doubledick were portrayed by West Digges himself. What was scheduled to be a long tour for this venture lasted only a few weeks in the hinterland. Dates were changed and cancelled. *Doubledick* petered out and was heard no more.

Meanwhile, in town *The Seven Poor Travellers* had come up again on July 10th, 1870, at the Victoria Theatre where J. Arnold Cave held command. During performance, as each story was called for in the scene at the Travellers' Rest songs (sung by Ernest Fox and the Misses Carelli) led into the enactment of that story by the company. The narrative was made visual. One of the members of that company was James Fawn, the comedian, later to be a top-liner of the Music Halls.

Across the Atlantic far less was heard in the theatre about the subject of Watts' Charity. New York had *The Seven Poor Travellers* at the New Bowery on January 15th, 1866, with two English actors, Walter Grisdale and George Lingard in the cast. There would seem to be no other version performed in or out of that city.

The Extra Number of *Household Words* for Christmas, 1855, like the previous volume comprised a number of stories contained in one. The title was *The Holly Tree Inn* and the tales within were those garnered by a snow-bound guest in order to pass the time of waiting until the way outside was cleared. Including the guest's own history, these tales totalled six and were the contributions of various writers. Dickens is credited with the pattern of the work, the beginning and the end. He also wrote the story told by the Boots about the eloping children. Adapting the new Annual for the stage provoked problems similar to those in *The Seven Poor Travellers*. The different stories, unrelated in time or

place, had to be brought together under one roof, as it were. John Beer Johnstone was again first in the field. His dramatisation of *The Holly Tree Inn*, given on January 7th, 1856, at the Strand Theatre, ran all through the month. There was only one scene but in this some of the tales were blended into a whole, narrated and acted. Johnstone, too, acted in the piece taking the part of the Landlord, Sam Tattenhall. Harry and Norah, the runaway tiny tots, were played by Willie Edouin, an old timer though only fourteen years old, and his sister, Julia. Figuring prominently in the dramatisation were Isaac Scatchard, the Ostler, and his frightening wife, Rebecca, from the Wilkie Collins's item in the Annual. Their exponents were G. Cooke and Louise Herbert. The same script was used at the Garrick in Leman Street on January 23rd following and at the Marylebone on January 28th. The performance at the Garrick was for the Benefit of Louis Levite (almost certainly an invented name) who mimed Harlequin in the Christmas Pantomime at that house. Wilfred, the headstrong son of the Poor Pensioner in Harriet Parr's contribution to the Extra Number, was played by Alfred Rayner, a Hamlet of the East End. He was particularly attracted to the subject and later made a version of his own which was to displace other adaptations in the Minor Theatres of London. At the Marylebone Wilfred, regarded as the leading rôle, was enacted by Charles Sennett.

On January 17th, 1865, *Tales of the Holly Tree Inn* entered the bill of the Britannia Theatre and remained there for three weeks. The management claimed the piece to be the only version adapting all the stories in the publication. C. H. Hazlewood, stock dramatist to that theatre, had probably performed the task. In an attempt to go one better than the *Brit*, as the house was familiarly called, *The Holly Tree Inn; or, The Snowed Up Traveller*, by William Seaman, given at the Victoria on January 21st was proclaimed by the management to be the only truthful realisation of the stories. Nevertheless there were many extraneous characters in the production, including Blackberry Joe played by Jack Bradshaw, known in after years as "the villain at the Vic," and Mealy Muggs played by Mrs. A. Saville. More faithful to the original were T. E. Mills as the Ostler, J. Howard as the Boots and Mrs. Henry Vining as Hester, the poor Pensioner. Two very young ladies, Miss Vaul and Miss Hamilton, were the children, Harry and Norah. That same night, January 21st, saw the first performance at the Standard in Shoreditch of another *Holly Tree Inn*. It was an anonymous version acted by the company at that popular house under the direction of John Douglas. Yet another *Holly Tree Inn* was given at the Grecian on the following February 27th for one performance only, the occasion being a Benefit Night on behalf of the victims of the fire that had entirely destroyed the Pavilion Theatre a fortnight before.

The Boots at the Holly Tree Inn; or, The Juvenile Elopement to Gretna Green, was the full title given by Benjamin Webster to his adaptation, a one-act comedy at the Adelphi on February 4th, 1856. Announced for a month earlier, but held back owing to the success of Mark Lemon's pantomime of *Jack and the Beanstalk*,

the piece treated only of the juvenile episode in the Christmas Number. Webster cast himself for Cobbs, a considerably over-written rôle in his version. The Boots had much to say about events both before and after the arrival of the infant lovers played by little Miss Manning and equally little Miss Craddock. The snow-bound guest, in the person of John Parselle, had to listen at length to Cobbs and stand witness to the children's elopement. The comedy, not altogether Adelphi fare, met with small success.

BENJAMIN WEBSTER

Courtesy: Victoria and Albert Museum.

Surely one of the most eerie tales ever penned is that of Isaac Scatchard, the mind-racked individual who sees an embodiment of his murderous wife some seven years before he is to meet and marry her. Alfred Rayner, having played Wilfred in the Johnstone dramatisation, felt that the haunted Isaac could be written up more and made into a better acting part. Eliminating the juvenile elopement episode altogether, Rayner contrived a version where he could revel in the rôle. At first named *The Fatal Vision* it was produced at the Standard, May 9th, 1859, and later in the year at the Marylebone on December 13th. His piece was afterwards given at the Grecian as *The Ostler's Vision* and revived a number of times under that title. Rayner continued to play Scatchard, on and off, for well over a decade.

Away from the ghostly element came a charming adaptation, concerned only with the story told by the Boots. This was *The Holly Tree Inn* by Mrs. Oscar Beringer, first performed at a matinée at Terry's Theatre, January 15th, 1891, when Vera Beringer was young Harry and Minnie Terry his infant lady-love Norah. The play was given again at the same theatre on December 28th, 1896, for some weeks as a curtain-raiser to *Love in Idleness* of Louis N. Parker. Later it was to constitute one of the items of the Matinee at the Lyric, February 7th, 1921, in aid of the Charles Dickens Children's Library. *The Holly Tree Inn* of Mrs. Beringer seems to have been the only dramatisation to reach America where it was first performed at the Boston Museum on February 13th, 1892. The following April 18th the piece came to the Union Square Theatre in New York. In both cities the children were enacted by Master Wallie Eddinger and Vida McNeil.

(To be continued

DICKENS'S INSURANCE POLICIES

By William J. Carlton

SOME of the less reputable insurance companies which flourished in the early years of the Victorian era were satirized with trenchant irony in the pages of *Martin Chuzzlewit*, but its author was far too astute and far-sighted to overlook the advantages which this form of investment might provide for him and his family if it were done on a sound business footing. The first of many proposals for an insurance on Dickens's life appears to have been made to the Sun Life Assurance Society on January 9th, 1838, eight months after and perhaps in consequence of the sudden death of Mary Hogarth. On that day the following entry was made in the Sun Life Minute Book:

"Read a proposal to insure £1000 on the life of Mr. Chas. Dickens now in his 26th year, who appeared before the Committee and

"Resolved that if the answers of the referees prove satisfactory the Proposal be accepted

"£1000 at £2 3 9	£21	17	6
"Policy	3	0	0
	£24	17	6"

Dickens wrote in his diary on the same day:

"Went to the Sun office to insure my life, where the Board seemed disposed to think I work too much. Made Forster and Pickthorn[1] my Doctor, the references—and after an interesting interview with the Board and the Board's Doctor[2], came away to work again."

His work at this time was, in the words of G. K. Chesterton, "incessant and almost bewildering." *Oliver Twist* was appearing in *Bentley's Miscellany* which he was editing; he was editing (in rather more than the usual sense) the *Memoirs of Grimaldi* and writing *Sketches of Young Gentlemen;* he had contracted to deliver the first part of *Nicholas Nickleby* in March; and *Barnaby Rudge* was to follow *Oliver Twist*. Forster tells us that as the story of *Oliver Twist* shaped itself to its close it took extraordinary hold of him. "I never knew him work so frequently after dinner, or to such late hours (a practice he afterwards abhorred) as during the final months of this task."

Pickthorn the doctor, or Forster, who knew the full extent of his activities, had evidently revealed to the insurance office the strain under which he was working, for on January 19th another entry was made in the minute book:

"Read the answers of the referees as to the health of Mr. Dickens, and declined the Proposal of assurance on his life made to committee on the 9th of January instant."

[1] F. P. Burrell Pickthorn, M.R.C.S., author of *Pathological and Practical Observations on Spinal Diseases*, 1831, was cited by Dickens as his "usual medical attendant". He was still the family doctor in 1840.

[2] Dr. Henry H. Southey (1783-1865), physician to George IV and Queen Adelaide, brother of the poet.

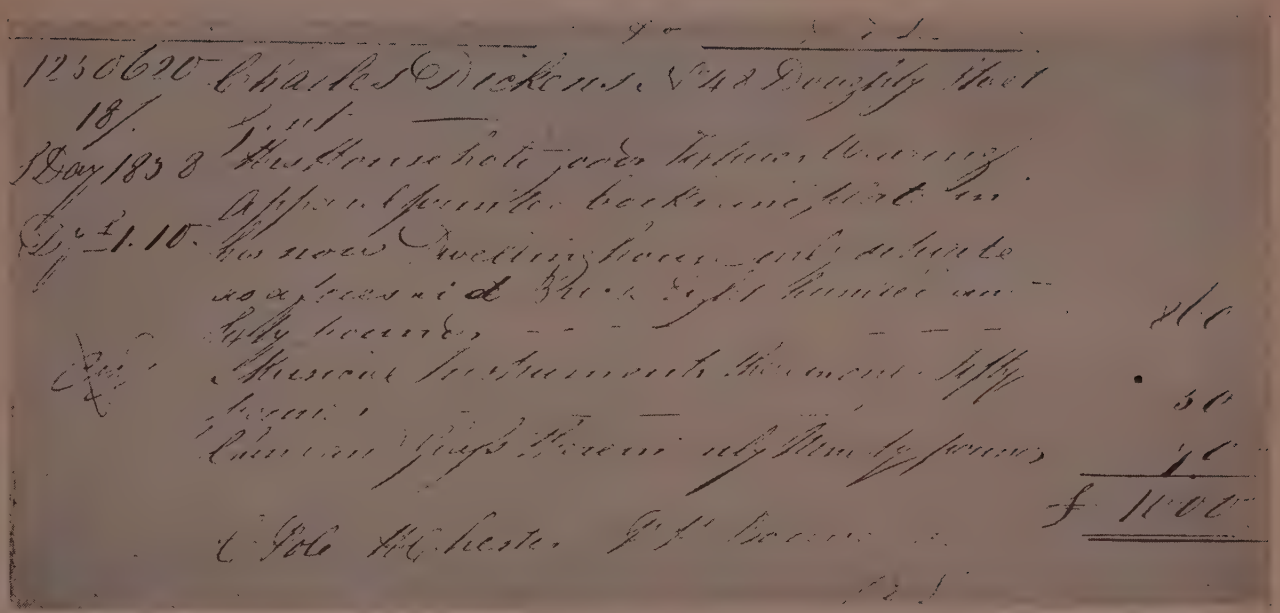
Although this particular application was declined on the ground of overwork, the young novelist was not deterred. A significant entry in his diary on July 16th, 1838, reads: "Life Insurance 2." It is clear from a letter to Thomas Mitton written on October 17th, 1841, that at some time previously he had insured his life with another company, the Argus (afterwards merged with the Imperial), and he may have been referring to this policy when he wrote to Mitton on July 24th, 1840: "Inclosed is a cheque (dated 6th next month) for the life insurance."[1]

In the summer of 1841 Dickens insured his life for £2,000 with the Britannia Life Insurance Company, and on July 31st of that year he wrote to Chapman & Hall, his publishers, that he was willing for them to hold the policy (No. 2251) as "a further security", and that "the same will this day be handed over to you by my solicitor".[2] In writing on the following October 17th, to Mitton, then acting as his solicitor, he said: "I asked the advice of a great City man,[3] whose name I must not repeat, but who is perfectly acquainted with the whole monied concerns, and monied people of London, relative to my life Insurances. He tells me that both the Argus and the Britannia are such very doubtful offices, that if I can effect an insurance in any good one of long standing, I had better get rid of those policies for any little money they may fetch, and put up with the loss. This is pleasant."[4]

Apart from the allusions to them in Dickens's letters, no record of the Argus and Britannia policies is known to have survived. The Britannia continued to function until 1865, when it was merged in the Briton Medical and General Company, which in turn was taken over in 1892 by the Sun Life Society.

That there was some justification for the rejection of his earlier application to the Sun Life Society is plain from the fact that on October 8th, 1841, Dickens underwent a severe if successful operation for fistula. To his friend Thomas Beard he admitted that this was "a disease caused by working over much, which has been gathering, it seems, for years[5]; while to Macvey Napier, the editor of the *Edinburgh Review*, he wrote that it was "the consequence of too much sitting at my desk."[6] From this operation, however, he made a remarkably rapid recovery. Six weeks later, and less than two months before he was to set out on his first voyage to America, he took out a life policy for £5,000 with the Eagle Insurance Company, whose actuary Henry Porter Smith became one of his firmest friends and was godfather to his son Sydney Smith Haldimand Dickens. The two sponsors of the proposal were Forster and Macready, both of whom testified to the novelist's very good general health, sober habits and active pursuits, as well as to his sedentary occupation, the former stating that he knew him to have been lately under the care of Mr. Salmon,[7] of Broad Street. On November 18th Dickens informed

[1] *Letters* (Nonesuch ed.), I. 266.
[2] *Ibid.*, I. 343.
[3] The "great City man" may have been Lieut.-General Sir John Wilson (1780-1856), a Director of the Eagle Company, who rented 1 Devonshire Terrace while Dickens was in America.
[4] *Letters* (Nonesuch ed.), I. 358.
[5] *Ibid.*, I, 357.
[6] *Ibid.*, I, 358.
[7] Frederick Salmon (1796-1868), founder of St. Mark's Hospital in 1835, is credited with performing more than 3,500 operations without a fatal result. Dickens presented him with copies of several of his books.



The entry in the register of the Sun Fire Office of Dickens's policy insuring the contents of his home at 48 Doughty Street.

Mitton that the Eagle Company had insured him for £5,000 at the ordinary rate, and added: "They were very particular in requiring an emphatic contradiction of the mad story,[1] but they stuck at nothing else having Salmon's report, of course. You cannot think what a comfort this is to my mind, or, if I *should* get into any danger in my Travels how pleasant it will be to reflect that my darlings are well provided for."[2]

The Eagle insurance remained in force until the novelist's death, and in October 1870 the Company paid £6,337 7*s.* 1*d.* to the beneficiaries. The cause of death was certified as apoplexy; but all who were familiar with Dickens's strenuous career knew only too well that the predisposing cause of his untimely end was the same which had led to the rejection of his first proposal for an insurance on his life -overwork. As one of them put it, "Charles Dickens worked continually, earnestly, sedulously, unflinchingly, from the first dawn of his adolescence to the golden autumn of his age."[3]

* * * * *

It has only recently come to light that as early as May 17th, 1837, the novelist effected an insurance against fire in respect of the contents of his house at 48 Doughty Street, of which he had become a tenant some six weeks earlier. This policy was issued by the Sun Fire Office, the oldest insurance office in the world. Although the policy itself has disappeared, the details are entered in the policy register of the Sun Insurance Office, of which a facsimile is printed on page 135. As the date of issue appears only at the top of the sheet it is not seen in the reproduction. Here are the particulars as shown in the register:

1250620	CHARLES DICKENS No. 48 Doughty	
18/.	Street Gent	
LDay 1838	His Household goods Fixtures Wearing Apparel printed books and plate in his	
Dy £1.10.	now Dwelling house only situate as aforesaid Brick Eight hundred and Sixty pounds	860
	Musical Instruments therein only Fifty pounds	50
	China and Glass therein only Ninety pounds	90
	C. Pole H. Chester P. P. Bouverie	£1000

The signatories on behalf of the Company were three of the managers: Charles Pole, Henry Chester and the Hon. Philip Pleydell Bouverie.

One would have liked to know much more about the printed books and musical instruments so cursorily noted in this document. No doubt the latter belonged to Mrs. Dickens, who came

1 A rumour had gained currency that Dickens was demented (see Forster's *Life*, ed. Ley, p. 101).
2 *Letters* (Nonesuch ed.), I. 362-3.
3 G. A. Sala, *Charles Dickens*, 1870, 90.

from a musical family, and included the inevitable pianoforte. As a matter of interest it may be mentioned that the contents of 48 Doughty Street (The Dickens House) are at present insured for £8,000.

Soon after leaving Doughty Street to take up his residence at No. 1 Devonshire Terrace, Marylebone, Dickens took out another fire insurance policy with the same office, this time for £2,000, and the earlier policy was cancelled. The items covered by the new policy, dated January 29th, 1840, were enumerated as follows:

	£
His Household Goods Wearing Apparel printed Books and Plate in his now Dwelling house only situate as aforesaid Brick	1450
Fixtures therein only	100
Musical Instruments therein only	50
Pictures and Prints therein only	100
China and Glass therein only	200
Stock and Utensils, Live Stock included, in Stable and Coachhouse communicating near Brick	100
	£2000

The original policy, signed by the same three managers of the Sun Fire Office, is now in the possession of Admiral Sir Gerald C. Dickens, K.C.V.O., to whom I am indebted for permission to publish these particulars.

It may not be out of place to mention here that the Sun Fire mark was depicted in the original illustrations to four of Dickens's works. One was Cruikshank's "The Parish Engine" in *Sketches by Boz;* the others were "The Secretary's Watch" or "Gashford on the Roof" in *Barnaby Rudge,* "Mr. Pecksniff on his Mission" in *Martin Chuzzlewit,* and "Restoration of Mutual Confidence between Mr. and Mrs. Micawber" in *David Copperfield*—all by Hablôt K. Browne.

For valuable help in the preparation of this article my thanks are due to Messrs H. J. Larkman, F.C.I.I., and W. J. Goddard, A.C.I.I., of the Sun Life Assurance Company, as well as to the Eagle Star Insurance Company.

NOTES ON *BARNABY RUDGE*

By T. W. Hill.

(*Continued from page 96*)

Chapter XVI

1. THE STREETS OF LONDON. Here are five paragraphs of masterly description of a London and its life that had almost vanished by the time Dickens was writing (1841).

2. DRUMS OR MASQUERADES. A drum was a noisy, crowded evening party or rout. Quadrille was a game of cards for four persons; hence its name. It was finally ousted by whist. The dance known as the quadrilles was not introduced till the early part of the nineteenth century.

3. HALF DRUNK TO TYBURN. A criminal on the way to Tyburn (Hyde Park Corner) for execution was often supplied with intoxicants, partly perhaps from kind motives and partly to deaden sensibility.

4. DAMNING THE ORDINARY. That is, cursing (in their intoxication) the ordinary, the chaplain of Newgate whose duty it is to attend condemned prisoners to prepare them for death.

5. DEALT IN BODIES. This refers to the "body-snatchers," of whom Jerry Cruncher in *A Tale of Two Cities* is a typical example, who rifled graves and sold the bodies to dissectors.

6. OXFORD ROAD. The old name of the road from Hyde Park Corner westwards.

7. NIGH ELEVEN O'CLOCK. One of many instances in Dickens's books of the late hours until which shops were kept open.

8. TONGUE CLOVE TO ITS ROOF. If through fright or fear the mouth became dry, the tongue cleaves to its roof and the power of speech is affected. The expression is Scriptural and is found in several places in the Bible: Psalm cxxxvii, v. 6, "If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth," and Ezekiel iii, v. 26, "I will make thy tongue cleave to the roof of thy mouth that thou shalt be dumb."

CHAPTER XVII

1. ASKED FOR BRANDY. Poor as Mrs. Rudge was she could afford to keep brandy in the house, for intoxicants were cheap; the excise duty was less than 2s. a bottle. It will be remembered that in *Our Mutual Friend* three-penn'orths of gin was Mr. Dolls's principal source of nourishment.

2. DARK LANTHORN. This is the spelling in the first edition of the book; lantern appears in later editions. The ancient lanthorn was provided with translucent plates of horn until glass was introduced.

3. DISGORGING . . . FROM HIS POUCH. Crop is of course meant by pouch as the raven has no other means of storing food.

CHAPTER XVIII

1. BETWEEN CORNHILL AND SMITHFIELD. Rudge certainly chose a district exceptionally well furnished with short "backways, lanes and courts." It was in this part of London that Jasper stopped at the "hybrid hotel in a little square." (*Edwin Drood*).

2. LAMPLIGHTER . . . LITTLE TRACK OF SMOKE. The lamplighter carried a pole at the end of which was a little oil-lamp protected by a cylindrical brass shield (perforated) so that the wind should not extinguish it. With this pole he lifted a small panel in the base of the glass lantern on the top of the lamp-post, turned the tap of the gas-jet and ignited the gas. On windy days

there would be a " little track of smoke " from the oil-lamp on his pole.

3. CITY JAIL. This probably refers to the House of Correction by Clerkenwell Close, erected 1615. It was rebuilt and enlarged in 1818 and closed in 1877 and the site is now occupied by a school.

4. MEAN STREET. This is the " one of the narrowest of the narrow streets which diverged " from Barbican (chapter viii).

CHAPTER XIX

1. LOVE AMONG THE ROSES. Probably from a ballad by J. C. Doyle; the author of the words is unknown:

> " Young Love flew to the Paphian bower . . .
> The Graces there were cutting posies,
> And found young Love among the roses."

2. FIVE FATHOMS DEEP. Figurative for a great depth, as in Ariel's song in *The Tempest*:

> " Full fathoms five thy father lies."
>
> Act I, sc. 2.

3. VINEGARING . . . HARTSHORNING . . . WARM BRANDY-AND WATER. The common and, as regards the last item, popular remedy for an attack of the " vapours " or " hysterics."

4. SHAY. A Cockney's attempt to give an important French word, *chaise*, a foreign and therefore genteel sound. A chaise (the word of course means chair) is a light carriage resembling a large bath-chair; it was drawn by one horse and there was no driver's seat apart. Dickens had a chaise at Gad's Hill.

5. GRETNA GREEN. A village in Scotland about six miles north of the English border. The irregular marriages were practically suppressed by the Act of 1856 which made such provisions that Gretna Green marriages became invalid and illegal.

6. GOODLY LOAVES OF SUGAR. White crystallised sugar was made in " loaves " resembling an artillery shell in shape. Grocers sometimes exhibited them on the shop shelves. These loaves were cut into small cubical pieces called " loaf sugar " in distinction from the grain or " moist " sugar. Now that loaves have fallen out of use " loaf sugar " has become " lump " or " cube " sugar.

6. DRAWERS FULL OF PIPES. Clay pipes, either " church-wardens " or " nose-warmers " according to their length, were kept at the inns in drawers behind the bar.

7. WAKING WAS PAIN. From a poem of the period:

> " Is this a dream ?
> Then waking would be pain.
> Oh, do not wake me;
> Let me dream again."

Longfellow expresses the same sentiment in the Spanish Student, act iii. sc. 5:

> " Is this a dream ? Oh if it be a dream,
> Let me sleep on, and do not wake me yet."

Chapter XX

1. WHOSE FOSTER-SISTER SHE WAS. See chapter xxvii, note 2.

2. TOKENS OF FEMININE LOVES AND CARES. "Birds, flowers, books, drawing, music" provide an indication of the kind of education and occupation of the girls of the well-to-do classes of the period.

3. AT THE WORST THEY ARE SURE TO MEND. This optimistic maxim, so consoling to the unfortunate, has been in use for many centuries and is found all through literature. Shakespeare, of course, reproduces it in his own inimitable way:

> "Things at the worst will cease, or else climb upward
> To what they were before."
>
> *Macbeth*, act iv, sc. 2.

John Owen the Epigrammatist, Shakespeare's contemporary, writes "To a Friend in Distress":

> "I wish thy lot, now bad, still worse, my friend,
> For when at worst, they say, things always mend."

4. LONG LETTER . . . CROSSED AFTERWARDS. The custom of writing to the bottom of the page and then turning the page round and writing across the script saved weight when postage was dear. The habit became so ingrained that when the Penny Post was introduced in 1840 ladies continued the custom until the end of the nineteenth century and even later.

Chapter XXIII

1. MY LORD CHESTERFIELD. John Chester calls the 4th Earl of Chesterfield a "model for all wise fathers," and Dickens is known to have based Chester upon him. He was the author of *Letters to His Son*, that is his natural son Philip; they contain advice on the acquirement of the accomplishments and behaviour of an elegant member of Society. Mr. Chester's manners throughout are consistent, and he is never at a loss.

2. TIME IS MONEY. A phrase constantly used by novelists, essayists and publicists, as well as in conversation. The maxim is founded on Bacon who writes in his Essay on *Despatch:* "Time is the measure of business, as money is of wares."

3. BUMPER WITH A BEAD. Is this a misprint for "head?" The "head" on a bumper, that is a full glass of liquor is the mass of froth. Froth obviously consists of beads or bubbles, but one bead of froth in a bumper of ale is difficult to visualise.

Chapter XXIV

1. I OBSERVE E.C. FROM HERE. Mr. Tappertit's faculty for "eyeing-over" was for once at fault: Mr. Chester's name was John and his initials were therefore J.C.

Chapter XXVI

1. HEWER OF WOOD AND DRAWER OF WATER. When Joshua conquered Canaan he appointed certain of the captured tribes

to do the domestic and menial duties necessary in the camps and settlements; they were the hewers of wood and drawers of water and became "bondmen," practically slaves. (Josh. ix, 21-23).

Chapter XXVII

1. HIPPED. This word, meaning a little hurt in the feelings, or rendered melancholy, is the past participle of an obsolete verb "hip" which is a contraction of hypochondria. In 1848 Dickens used it in the well-known rhymed letter to Mark Lemon urging him to take a holiday:

> "Lemon is a little hipped,
> And this is lemon's true position;
> He is not pale, he's not white-lipped,
> Yet wants a little fresh condition . . ."

2. I AM HER FOSTER-MOTHER. (See also chapter XX, note 1). This is Dickens's ingenious device for connecting the families of Haredale and Varden, although one was Roman Catholic and the other Protestant. The relationship assists the plot considerably.

(To be continued)

SYDNEY MARGARET DICKENS

We regret to announce the death, at her Richmond home, on March 21st, of Mrs. Sydney Margaret Whinney, in her 89th year. Mrs. Whinney was the last surviving child of Charles Dickens the Younger, who had seven daughters and one son. Mrs. Whinney married Mr. Thomas Bostock Whinney in 1895, and leaves a daughter and two sons, to whom the deep sympathy of the Fellowship is extended.

THE DICKENS FELLOWSHIP

Brief contributions are invited for this page. *Press cuttings not acceptable.*

Nottingham

This season the Nottingham branch has continued the fortnightly readings. On December 4th the secretary gave a talk on her visit to America, and on December 11th some of the members gave a reading of *The Battle of Life*, arranged by Mr. Basil Bastow. The birthday dinner was held on February 5th and attended by 63 members. After dinner the toasts were proposed by the President, Mr. Bastow, Mrs. Murray and Mr. Allen. Charities to which subscriptions have been given this year include the R.C. Nazareth House and the C. of E. Southwell House, Home for Girls.

M.G.

Montreal

The Montreal branch has been enjoying a highly successful forty-fifth season which began with an interesting review of *Nicholas Nickleby* by the late Hon. President, Mr. E. C. Woodley,

and followed by a fine address on Wilkie Collins and Dickens by Miss Constance Beresford-Howe of MacGill University, another memorable "Tiny Tim Night," which resulted in many toys being distributed among the hospitals of the city, and a generous donation of funds to be allocated later to a suitable charity, a lecture on "Why Read Dickens?" by the Mayor of Westmount, Mr. Roy Campbell; another by Dr. James Bonar on "If Dickens were alive to-day," a fine recital by Mr. Ray King, and an address by Dr. Cecil P. Martin, of MacGill University. A feature of the season has been a series of sketches arranged from *Nicholas Nickleby* by Mr. Ed. Wilson. At the Birthday Dinner, the principal toast was proposed by the Rev. Dr. F. W. Norwood. In September the Editor of *The Dickensian* visited the city and was entertained to luncheon by several of the leading members. During the season the Branch suffered two heavy losses by the death of Mr. E. C. Woodley, Hon. President, and Mrs. Mabel R. Edwards, Corresponding Secretary.

S. L.

Wolverhampton

The Wolverhampton Branch has enjoyed an attractive and varied programme during the past season. A number of members who have left the district have fortunately been replaced by new recruits. The meetings included an interesting paper by Miss D. L. Minards of London, another fine reading by Mr. Williams, and readings by members. Christmas saw a special showing of a film version of *Oliver Twist*. The Dramatic Group successfully presented scenes from *David Copperfield*. The summer will be marked by a coach excursion to Stoneleigh Abbey in Warwickshire.

G. W.

Blackpool

The Blackpool Branch reports a busy and happy session. Membership remains at about fifty, several new members having replaced some who have left. We mourn the passing of Mrs. Slater, one of the Founder Members. A quiet, faithful and devoted member, she was a keen Dickensian, and a great worker for our Christmas Benevolent Fund. She is greatly missed. The highlights of the Session included the introduction to *Nicholas Nickleby* by the President, visits from the N.W. Regional Branches, papers by Miss Alys Myers, M.J.I., and our Vice President, Mrs. R. Newell. The Birthday Dinner was held on February 10th, when guests were present from Blackburn, Preston and St. Annes. Many members wore Dickensian costumes which added greatly to the festive atmosphere. The Rev. W. Walter Selby proposed the "Immortal Memory," and commented on the happy atmosphere of fellowship and good will. Members' night brought a mixed bag of good things, and finally our President's Night crowned the session with a celebration of our Branch's thirtieth Birthday. A two-tier birthday cake, adorned with 30 candles and bearing the quotation "God bless us every one," was cut, and the Branch was toasted. Madame Cleator, L.R.A.M., presented a programme of birthday music and Dickensian recitals. A special feature of the meetings was the selection of readings

from *Nicholas Nickleby* arranged and given by the President, Madame Cleator. At the Annual Meeting held on 28th April the new President, Mrs. R. Newell, was inducted into office by the retiring President.

N.B.

Bath

The session 1954–1955 has been one of continued interest and steady progress. Membership has been well maintained. The session opened with a Social at the invitation of the President, Mr. Brian W. B. Dawes. Readings from *The Old Curiosity Shop* occupied the greater part of the programme. Other activities included a New Year Social, and four very successful Whist Drives. The annual birthday dinner was held, as usual, at the Red House. The toast of " The Immortal Memory " was proposed by the City Librarian, Mr. Peter Pagan. The proceedings concluded with a lecture, entitled " The Dickensian Era " by Mr. F. W. G. Thomas. An enjoyable summer outing to Wells, Glastonbury and Downside was arranged by Mr. F. Mills. Mr. Brian Dawes is succeeded as President by Miss E. D. Abbott. The loss of a valued member, through the death of Mr. Luther Wilson, a founder, and Life President of the Society, was deeply regretted by members.

F.W.G.T.

The following changes in Hon. Secretaries have taken place, and the Fellowship offers its thanks to those retiring and its best wishes to those appointed. At Birmingham, Mrs. Fox Davies is succeeded by Miss K. Venables; at Tewkesbury, Mr. C. J. Turner is succeeded by Mr. L. G. Marston, and at Wellington, Miss L. McKenzie is succeeded by Mrs. Kirton.

A warm welcome to Britain is extended to Miss L. McKenzie of Wellington, N.Z., Mr. and Mrs. A. Hay Hedley of Melbourne, and Mrs. Eunice Griffiths of the California Pickwick Club.

Books for Study, Season 1955/6:
The Old Curiosity Shop and Master Humphrey's Clock.

OBITUARY

E. C. Woodley

Once more death has taken one of the most outstanding Dickensians of Montreal in the person of our Honorary President, E. C. Woodley. Edward Carruthers Woodley, M.A., F.R.Hist.S., distinguished Montreal scholar and writer, teacher, historian and churchman. A former president of the Provincial Association of Protestant Teachers of Quebec. Mr. Woodley had a career which spanned three continents and was studded with high achievement in at least five fields of endeavor. After graduating from the Canada Congregational College in Montreal, he went to Calcutta, India, where he was professor of English on the staff of the London Missionary College from 1902 to 1907. In 1912 he was invited to join the Central Turkey Mission of American Board of Commissioners for the Near East, and he went to the University of

Leyden, Holland, to study. Later he was stationed at Marash, Turkey, where he lectured in Greek, early church history and Christian education at the theological seminary there. Mr. Woodley returned to Canada at the close of the first World War and held many important positions in the literary world since his return. At the time of his death he was President of the St. James Literary Club, and Honorary President of the Dickens Fellowship, Montreal Branch. He was the author of several books on " Quebec ".

W.H.S.

F. R. Dean

The Manchester Branch has suffered a grievous loss in the death of Mr. F. R. Dean, which occurred suddenly on April 18th. An outstanding Dickensian, a leading member of the Manchester Branch for over 35 years, he was twice its President, in 1924/5 and 1938/9, and its Hon. Secretary in 1921/23. He was Chairman of the Council of the Fellowship in 1932 and presided at the Blackpool Conference in 1933. His knowledge of Dickens was encyclopaedic; he gave innumerable papers at Branch meetings and contributed handsomely to discussion. His learning and scholarship were always placed generously at our disposal in Manchester and in these pages, to which he made many notable contributions, particularly on Dickens's associations with this city, a subject he made peculiarly his own. He was a charming, loyal and dependable friend. He never counted the cost of his service to others, and his wise counsel, his erudition and his friendship will be sorely missed. Our deepest sympathy is extended to Mrs. Dean and her son.

J.L.A.

We also regret to record the death of Mrs. I. Colville of Headquarters, Mrs. Page of Birmingham, Mrs. Lucas and Mr. E. Hampson of Manchester, Mr. C. Arthur Chase and Mrs. Arthur Strong of Boston, Mass.

The Dickens Fellowship

LONDON MEETINGS

June Wed., 8th. Eve of the Anniversary of the death of Charles Dickens. A wreath will be laid on the grave in Westminster Abbey. Meet West Door, 6 p.m.

Sun. 12th. Commemorative Service, Southwark Cathedral, 6-30 p.m.

Tues. 14th. Evening Ramble to Chiswick and Hammersmith. Mr. Mostyn Harper. Meet Hammersmith Parish Church, Queen Caroline Street., Hammersmith Broadway, 6.30 p.m.

SPECIAL NOTICE: The Fête arranged for Saturday, June 25th, has been postponed till October 29th. Details to be announced.

July Sat., 9th. Pilgrimage to Canterbury. Tickets, inclusive of luncheon and tea, 27*s.* 6*d.*, from The Dickens House. Bookable on receipt of non-returnable deposit of 7*s.* 6*d.*

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